

THE BUSINESS OF BEING CHEROKEE: AN EXAMINATION OF THE
TRANSFORMATIVE POWER AND VISION OF SMALL BUSINESSES ON THE
QUALLA BOUNDARY OF THE EASTERN BAND OF CHEROKEE INDIANS

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A dissertation submitted to the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in
partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the
Department of Anthropology

Chapel Hill
2012

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ABSTRACT

COURTNEY LEWIS: The Business of Being Cherokee: An Examination of the Transformative Power and Vision of Small Businesses on the Qualla Boundary of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
(Under the direction of Valerie Lambert)

This dissertation examines the crucial socio-economic impact of small businesses and small business owners on the Qualla Boundary of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. It addresses the questions of how boundaries that Native Nations must work within—land, legal, and representational—impact these small business owners, how these boundaries are transformed, and how these transformations can literally and figuratively alter the landscape of a Native Nation. Within these boundaries, I discuss the EBCI governmental programs initiated specifically to encourage and aid small business owners. I then critically explore the characteristics of these businesses and business owners (products/services offered, education provided through employee training and public information, previous business experience, etc.), as well as how issues of representation and the EBCI's casino bear upon business ownership. This work furthermore chronicles these businesses' challenges during the Great Recession, thereby documenting the means by which these critical components of our worldwide economy buttress themselves against economic shocks.

Economically, it is the independence and choice provided by small businesses that stabilizes, diversifies, stimulates, and helps sustain the robustness of a Native Nation's economy. This impact suggests that our current lack of information about contemporary Native Nation small businesses has hindered our understandings of not only American Indian

people as entrepreneurs and small business owners, but also our overall understandings of reservation economies.

This research topic was developed in conversation with the EBCI chief, economic development offices, and small business owners. It is based on over fifteen months of participant observation as well as my own experiences as a Cherokee citizen and small business owner. The methodology included networking with small business owners, their customers, and residents in order to select individuals for formal interviews. This was followed by structured and semi-structured interviews and observation of public events which concerned small business owners, such as those hosted by the Chamber of Commerce and the tribal council meetings. This research included conversational analysis via formal data gathering with archival documents, particularly the Cherokee One Feather, regarding small business ownership and activities. This research has been approved by the UNC-Chapel Hill and EBCI IRB offices.

PREFACE

That night was so cold and blustery that every breath cut into your lungs. I hustled across the parking lot and the snow that signaled that a power outage was a real possibility for the weekend. It was a Friday evening. I entered the crowded coffeehouse called Tribal Grounds, shook off the snow, and was immediately enveloped by the warm aroma of coffee and pastries. I had braved the weather to attend a Cherokee language class led by a local high school student who worked at the new children's Kituwah Immersion Language Academy. He had his sights set on teaching college someday. This was his first foray into formally teaching adults—though he had coached beginners, including me, for years.

I skimmed the menu, written in both English and Cherokee syllabary, and ordered an indigenously grown coffee. The beans were hand-roasted by the owner, Natalie, an Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) citizen. While I waited for my order, I chatted with her about an open-mic night for locals that was planned for tomorrow night. I picked up my coffee and clung to it until my fingers regained warmth, then I went into the room for community events and meetings. The walls were covered with bright oil paintings created by a young contemporary Cherokee artist, Joshua L. Adams¹ (See figure P.1).

¹ This installment was, in the artist's words, "An attempt to establish an appealing relevance to the youth of the Eastern Band of Cherokee....Our community must evolve. We must save that which makes us Cherokee."

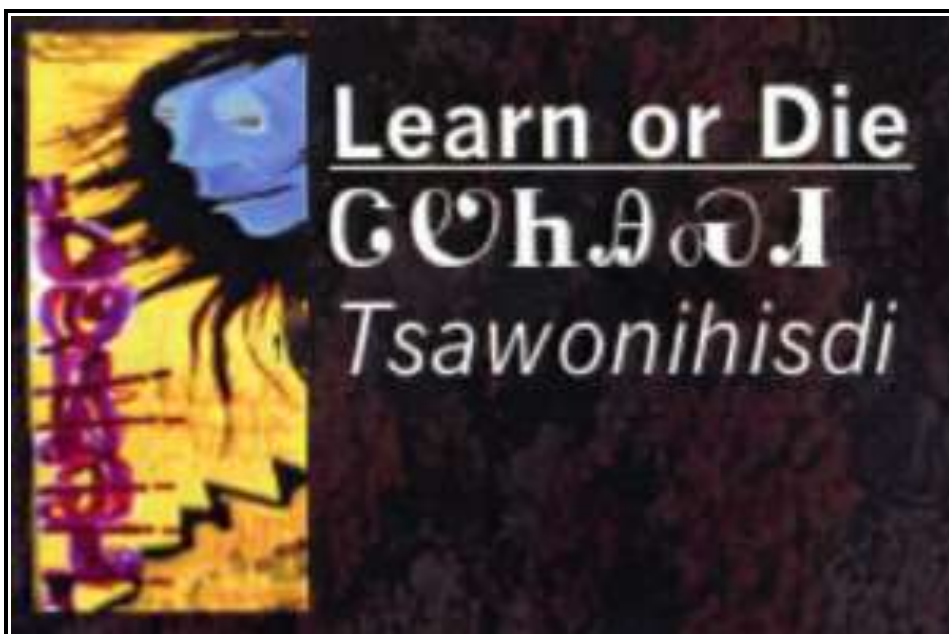


Figure P.1: “Conscious Effort” by Adams.

A diverse group of students were already waiting for class to begin: one was a neighboring high school teacher who wanted to make the Cherokee language available to her students; another was a coffee house employee and EBCI citizen who was given the night off to attend the class; and a third was a retired woman, also EBCI, who wanted to become conversational in Cherokee so she could speak with her grandchild in the new EBCI immersion program. As I sat down with them to practice (“Osiyo! Osiwotsu? Osiwotsu—nihina?” is heard in a repetitive chorus since we had only covered the basics of conversation), I considered how small businesses like this one—so vital for the economy and the exchange of language, art, and food—had been neglected by academic research (See figures P.2 and P.3).



Figure P.2: Tribal Grounds coffee house.



Figure P.3. A drink at Tribal Grounds coffee house.

The problem with the topic of business, like software programming or car maintenance, is that the subject is considered boring by all who are not in the thick of it. It is so ubiquitous in our United States society that it is taken for granted; it is mundane. When you talk about “business” as a concept, what comes to mind is a generic, corporate, large-scale firm made up of black business suits, cubicles, and a fleet of administrative staff. In that

world, you never truly buy a product from *someone*—only from something, i.e., the corporate entity. And when you call this entity with a concern or compliment, you are often met with an automated system instead of a person. Small businesses are different and this difference makes them exciting. In a real sense, small businesses *are* their owners: they are also your neighbors, family, and friends. They sell products you want because you asked for them, not just the same products that get shipped worldwide. They offer the services that are needed in their community because the owners live there and see the specific needs. And small businesses are the force that, by multitudes, drives the economy of every country.

The most difficult issue when discussing businesses on reservations with American Indian business owners, in particular, is the nearly inconceivable amount of variation across those reservations and business owners. I *could* claim that the stereotype so often portrayed in movies and in literature of the reservation’s desolate and barren landscape, dotted by corrugated tin roofed shacks, rusted and dead cars, and the occasional tumbleweed does not exist. But it does—albeit in differing forms—as any report on poverty in the United States will attest to. Alternatively, I could claim that Native Nations² are struggling every minute of the day to provide for people who live hand-to-mouth. But that also would also not be true because there are Native Nations who are, beyond a doubt, succeeding and continuing to create vital and sustainable economies for their communities. But to focus on either one of these scenarios, or even juggle them together like delicately labeled glass balls (“Poor Reservation,” “Rich Reservation”), would be problematic at best, and would miss the entire point of this research.

² I choose to use the term “Native Nations” in reference to the federally recognized tribal entities in the United States. Although the U.S. government legally refers to them as “Tribes” I find this term undermines and subjugates the status of these Native Nations, denying, in implication, that they are more than a small gathering of “primitive” peoples instead of the sovereign entities that they are.

The fact is that small businesses, and the people who own them, exist at every class and wealth level. Of course they appear in different guises—here a business consulting firm, there a one-pump gas station with an attached one room grocery store—but that is the beauty and advantage of small business. By nature, it can be more dexterous and, theoretically, be what you need it to be, at the place you need it to be. The reality, however, is that many small businesses are not allowed to be what they need to be. They are constrained by location, education, discrimination, and plain old issues of capital. These issues are compounded if you are an American Indian business owner and located on a reservation. For most business owners in the United States, if your business faces one of these issues, you have the ability to relocate. There are 3.5 million square miles of land available to find the best place to realize your dream. However, for a citizen of a Native Nation, such as the EBCI³, your choice is limited to the approximately 56,000 acres (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians 2010) of your reservation in order to sustain the business privileges of citizenship in that nation.

This dissertation addresses these and other Native Nation-specific perspectives and answers the questions regarding the small businesses impacts for American Indian peoples by unfolding a rich ethnographic study of small business owners and entrepreneurs on the homeland of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians in western North Carolina. My research is based on over fourteen months of participant observation field research working with the EBCI and my own experiences as a Cherokee citizen and small business owner. It utilizes both my graduate training in economics and doctoral training in anthropology. Since the

³ I use “EBCI” in this dissertation to refer to the EBCI government or collective actions (such as the results of elections). I will alternatively use “EBCI citizens” to designate the individual people of the EBCI. It is important to separate out these two realms as the actions taken by a government do not always represent the views of individual citizens of that government. Finally, on occasion, I will refer to the “Cherokee people” when speaking collectively of the citizens in all three federally recognized Cherokee nations.

founding of the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development in 1987, scholars from diverse disciplines have conducted large-scale investigations into reservation economies. However, nearly all of this work has focused exclusively on large tribally-owned and -operated businesses such as factories and casinos. My research goes beyond this focus to reveal that small businesses also have a crucial impact on reservation economies. This impact is due to the independence and choice provided by small businesses that diversifies, stimulates, and helps sustain the robustness of a Native Nation's economy. This suggests that our lack of information about small businesses has hindered our understandings of not only American Indian people as entrepreneurs and small business owners, but also our overall understandings of reservation economies. Having established and thoroughly documented this economic point of departure, my dissertation progresses to describing and analyzing the myriad sociocultural ramifications of these small businesses on the Qualla Boundary (the EBCI's reservation⁴). I critically explore, amongst other concepts, the physical spaces of these small businesses, the products and services they sell, and the education (in the form of both training and information) that these businesses provide to their employees and the public. Additionally, my work chronicles the shifting challenges of these small businesses during the time of the Great Recession, thereby documenting the means by which these critical components of our worldwide economy buttress themselves against economic shocks and survive. Most importantly, I answer the questions of how the boundaries that Native Nations have to work within—land, legal, and representational—impact these small

⁴ I will refer to the "Qualla Boundary" proper as a whole at times when discussing the legally- defined place-based physical location of the EBCI reservation. I will also at times refer to "Cherokee" (the specific town in Yellowhill) as the primary location of governmental and tourist activity within the Qualla Boundary.

businesses, how these boundaries are transformed, and how these transformations can truly alter the landscape of a Native Nation in both figurative and literal forms.

Why Am I Doing This Research? The Situating of Self

Academic Experience

Anthropologists would like to take credit for their relatively recent discovery of reflexivity, but the call for change was not strictly internal. In reality, it was many of the peoples who were the subjects of study who began to demand, “Anthropologist, study thyself!”⁵ This would eventually be followed by a cohort of indigenous people who thought that if they were going to be studied and published about, then they should be involved in this process and, thus, joined the ranks of academia. These are some of the powerful scholars that I descend from academically. The academic path that brought me to stand on the shoulders of these giants also colored my choice of this project, my methodology, and my perspectives on this project.

My path began as an undergraduate at the University of Michigan, where I studied economics as a major and anthropology as a minor. My experience in advanced research began in my master’s program where I was a research assistant for a labor economics professor; this work furnished me with the initial tools to conduct my doctoral research on American Indian tribal economic development and businesses. This training in economics gave me a solid base for statistical analysis as well as an ample understanding of the principles at work in American Indian economies. After receiving my master’s degree, I

⁵ This began occurring, in print, during the time of Vine Deloria Jr. who was the first to dedicate an entire chapter of a book to the subject of anthropologists and the effects of their research in American Indians, complete with suggestions for policy changes.

applied this knowledge while working at a Fortune 100 Top Ten finance firm where I researched and produced reports that forecasted the economic climate.

My current studies in economic anthropology at the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill complemented these experiences by adding anthropological theory, practice, and PhD level academic knowledge of indigenous peoples to my mathematic and statistical skills. In my ethnography coursework I spent a semester working with a local knitting group researching the emerging knitting trend amongst college students and its place in the larger “subversive” DIY (do-it-yourself) movement. This course focused heavily on collaborative work and had an immense impact on my methods for ethnographic work.

The papers I developed during this time in the PhD program mark the beginning of my working relationship with the EBCI and gave me valuable experience working with Native Nations and academics in a collaborative environment. During my first semester at UNC, I produced a research paper on economic development. For this paper, I spoke in person with Chief Hicks and other EBCI members about the new economic and “cultural revitalization” programs they are currently implementing. Not only did this paper bolster my background knowledge on EBCI history, but I was also able to develop a strong understanding of the current EBCI economic situation. The following semester, I chose to develop a term paper, which again included the EBCI, regarding the collaborative efforts between American Indians and archaeologists post-NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act). As a result of this collective training, my dissertation research is a collaborative ethnography. Accordingly in developing this project, I spent the year previous to my fieldwork discussing this research with members of the EBCI

community including small business owners, the EBCI Economic Development Office, and Chief Hicks.

Personal Experience

My academic experiences shaped how I developed my research, but it is my personal background that addresses the “why?” To begin, I am an enrolled citizen of the Cherokee Nation. This citizenship comes from my dad, whose experiences had a profound effect on my choice of research focus. Although Protests, death threats, and machine guns may not be the typical components of an academic career—but events like these punctuated my father’s life. He was the first person in his family to go to college and progressed to become the first American Indian to receive a Ph.D. in Social Work. As one of the few American Indian professors during the late 1960’s, he was involved with many cutting edge and controversial policies. These included helping to pass the Indian Child Welfare Act (a controversial act aimed to limit adoptions of American Indian children by non-Natives, resulting in the death threats) and being called on to participate in events like the occupation of Wounded Knee in 1973. From his experiences, I gradually came to understand the influence—and considerable responsibility—that being a professor means for your communities. Consequently, it has been my career and life goal to follow in his footsteps by bringing my diverse knowledge and experience to academia, as a researcher contributing to my Cherokee Nation and as a professor conveying this knowledge to a wide variety of students. In this respect, this dissertation represents a large step toward my career goals: to contribute to scholarship through a better understanding of tribal economic development and to contribute to both my American Indian community and academic community through my research.

Small business ownership came into my consciousness when my grandfather, also a Cherokee Nation citizen, opened his own diner in Muskogee called “Paul’s Top Dog” (See figure P.4). To this day, his hot dogs are still the gold standard for our family. It was not until I left the finance firm decades later that I became personally entrenched in small business ownership. It was at this time that my husband and I co-founded a small online business from the ground up. Programming knowledge and online marketing strategies change at a breakneck pace, which means that it takes constant vigilance to keep ahead of the competition. I found, however, that although an online business is different in many ways from a physical location, most of the fundamental challenges remain the same: finance management, personal connections to every aspect of the business, and the ability to live with perpetual uncertainty (financial, time management, etc.). Small businesses, then, are not just a mere curiosity for me, but a topic that I am intimately familiar with.



Figure P.4: Jean and Paul Lewis at Top Dog.

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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

After having picked up my usual post-lunch “soy-capp” at Tribal Grounds, I hit the road to go visit Charla and Zena (both EBCI citizens) at their store Cherokee By Design. Cherokee By Design originally began in 2007 as a small section in Charla’s dad’s store across the street and walking distance from the casino. Later, she and Zena were able to move into a vacant store space, also owned by her dad, and also across from the casino, but further away and off of the main road. Normally, this would have been a prime location because tourists drove by in order to go to the casino or to take a drive through the mountains to Maggie Valley, but that was before the new casino construction. Driving down Highway 19 towards the shop that day began with the traffic—cars piled up waiting to turn left with no light into the casino from the one-lane road. After passing the casino entrance, there was noise and dust from jackhammers and heavy earth-moving machinery. On my left was a massive skeletal structure of a parking deck and a giant hole; on my right was the temporary parking area for the construction workers. It was here that you could, if you looked hard enough, see a small sign with an arrow that read: Cherokee By Design. Turning right down the dirt-covered road, I found that tucked back off of the road (and, luckily, away from the rolling dust clouds) was a small building, no bigger than 16 feet across, with a tidy lawn and garden. This was the then home of Cherokee By Design.

The store inside was no bigger than 10 feet across and Zena sat at a table carefully hand-painting ceramics while Charla was squeezed into a curtained-off space in the back barely wide enough for her computer and some supplies. Both women were not yet middle-aged, Zena with

short, black nearly buzz-cut hair and Charla with a ponytail so she wouldn't get her hair covered in paint while doing ceramic work. They also had similar backgrounds in business before this. Zena had a landscape design company; Charla's family was famous for their Bigmeet pottery. Both had laid-back personalities, laughing at themselves (and occasionally others) as they worked all day preparing their items, researching new designs, and taking orders from locals for the upcoming holidays (See figures 1.1 and 1.2).



Figure 1.1: Charla Crowe



Figure 1.2: Zena Wolfe

The store was lined with shelves and packed with one of the most impressive arrays of unique and contemporary items found on the Qualla Boundary: including handmade and hand-painted ceramics covered in EBCI- and Cherokee-specific designs, such as the Road to Soco basket-weave pattern and both phonetic and syllabary Cherokee language. Other non-ceramic items (clocks, jewelry, curtains, etc.) were covered with these patterns. The unique aspect of Cherokee By Design products is that all their crafts are designed with daily use in mind, as opposed to most Native-made and EBCI-made “pottery as strictly art” items found in the upscale galleries around Cherokee. These items did not relegate Native-made products to the realm of only high art, but proved that they could, and should, be contemporary items that anyone, especially Cherokee citizens, could own and use every day. As Zena told me about their products, “It just depends on what people’s taste are because people want to preserve and people always want a part of the Cherokee culture. I’m flattered by that. I’m really flattered that

people like our native culture but at the same time, I'm more proud that . . . Charlie came up with this idea. Man she's preserving. She's preserving our language, our heritage" (See figures 1.3 and 1.4).



Figure 1.3: Cherokee By Design Products—Beanbread grease pitcher.



Figure 1.4: Cookie jar.

Focus Statement

The theoretical tools I have chosen to employ in my studies of small business on reservations are those of borders and boundaries, specifically those of land, citizenry, and representation, which I will discuss in detail in Chapter Five. Individually, these topics have been the subject of intense study since they form the basis of discourses on sovereignty, land rights (mineral, water, etc.), intellectual property, and many more topics vital to the practice of contemporary nation-building. As I sat down to gather my thoughts on the years of study and fieldwork that went into this research, I prepared myself to tackle this subject of boundaries being the embodiment of many contradictions: they are both intangible and physical, both ephemeral and timeless. The contradictions involved in discussing borders come into sharp focus when we look at how borders are used against Native Nations and used by Native Nations. They embody the power of the United States government to both dismantle and protect Native Nations, and they provide both fortifications and limitations when wielded by Native Nations.

On the other hand, many of the other topics that I raise in this dissertation are not singular to the EBCI or even to Native Nations. Issues such as financial challenges and technological impairments are faced by many small business owners — especially those in rural areas. However, it would be a mistake to write these off as merely issues that all small businesses owners face or to label financial challenges and technological impairments as merely part of a larger rural issue. Given their historical context, these issues are particularly acute for Native Nations. Native peoples have wrestled with issues of economic stability since they were cut off from their economic bases and then moved from their homelands. And while problems such as internet access may seem like a new issue, problems like these are, for Native Nations, tied directly to issues rooted back to the ownership of land. It would be easy to lump all of these

issues into one pot labeled “the problem of the (rural) small business owner,” but it would also be an egregious error that overlooks (1) how deeply these issues are embedded for Native Nations and (2) how, in order to address them, they must be dealt with as the distinct/unique problems that they are.

Why This Research Needs to be Done

For Native Nations

There are three concepts that are of primary importance to Native Nations when addressing the diverse economic topics. The first is economic identity. I use my own term of “economic identity” as a way to construct the perceptions (and/or stereotypes), both internal and external, that shape the economic choices made by either individuals or nations⁶. The Great Recession of 2008 brought into sharp focus, and public interest, issues of plutonomy (and plutocracy), globalization, and the need for solutions that provide for sustainable economic bases. Although Native Nations here in the United States have been actively engaged in these debates for nearly 500 years, they have been markedly excluded from these global dialogues. This is especially notable since their experiences and activities have achieved many successes despite legal, economic, and cultural violence and in defiance of baseless stereotypes. As I will discuss in detail in later, these stereotypes are the basis for Native Nations’ and their citizens’ economic identity as perceived by the larger American society. This economic identity characterizes American Indians as economically “pure” entities (i.e., free of capitalistic behavior) that have not, or should not, understand concepts of land ownership, profit, etc. and whose work

⁶ Using the United States as an example: since WWII, its identity as an economic world power has shaped both federal policy and public discourses. The recent failures in its economy are now threatening this perception, both internally and externally, as China emerges as the new economic world power and the value of the US dollar and the country’s ability to care for its citizens continues to drop.

efficacy, especially when residing on reservations, is highly underdeveloped. In short, these ideas claim that American Indians are incapable of shaping the economic world around them.

When Native Nations then challenge these notions by, for example, managing a successful casino, a backlash occurs. They can be accused of being not American Indian anymore (Cattelino 2010) and/or a new stereotype will emerge in its place, such as the wealthy casino-owning American Indian. As Lisa Neuman relates with the Wabanaki efforts in both casino ownership and basket making, the non-Natives of Maine accepted Wabanaki basket-making enterprises, “because they may romanticize Indian artisans, fitting basketmakers into the expected stereotypical roles of indigenous “craftspeople” and were seen as, “non-threatening.” When the Wabanaki attempted to open a casino, however, the non-Native residents of Maine voted down their proposal, while simultaneously approving an out-of-state racino. As Neuman states, “Wabanaki people are sometimes viewed by non-Natives as being incapable of mustering the kind of modern, businesslike efficiency required to manage a high-stakes casino” (Neuman 2009).

As succinctly put by William Ledford in the Cherokee One Feather newspaper⁷ (speaking about the Cobell litigation, which was tied up by the Senate), “One attitude from some Democrats and a LOT of Republicans is that they still maintain the view that we can’t handle our affairs and we don’t need this money. They’re worried about us spending OUR money? Somehow to them, being Indian means that we don’t have a clue. Trust me; it ain’t Indians that are clueless” (Ledford 2010). But, Native Nations are, as we speak, in the process of reforming this economic identity on their own terms. This new economic identity forged by American Indians is one that is similar to many Asian countries: a combination of economic success and

⁷ The Cherokee One Feather is the EBCI’s official newspaper that is supported by the EBCI government.

the ability to achieve this success in the context of one's own unique and transformative culture and on one's own terms. Tribally-run enterprises have been major actors in this process and they have garnered the expected backlash, both politically (Lambert 2007:211) and socially, from the larger non-Native society in the U.S. The idea of American Indians as competent and successful small business owners still has to make headway.

The second concept that Native Nations know well through experience is economic hegemony. I use this term to describe the actions and manipulations of a larger country, or body of countries, that use economic means (accumulation of debt, manipulation of resources, etc.) to subjugate a country or people⁸. This, historically and presently, is one of the single most effective ways to control and dominate another country because it renders that country unable to resist on nearly every level. It is also not usually thought of as an act of violence, per se, by other international countries and is therefore not condemned or resisted on a larger scale. But this economic subjugation that Native Nations have experienced has profound impacts on issues of sovereignty. By keeping a population in poverty and economically weak you ensure that issues such as crime and health care will be constant battles for them (See figure 1.5).

⁸ An example of this is the creation of massive debt in order to repossess land (or other resources) held by a nation.

United States Commission on Civil Rights 2003

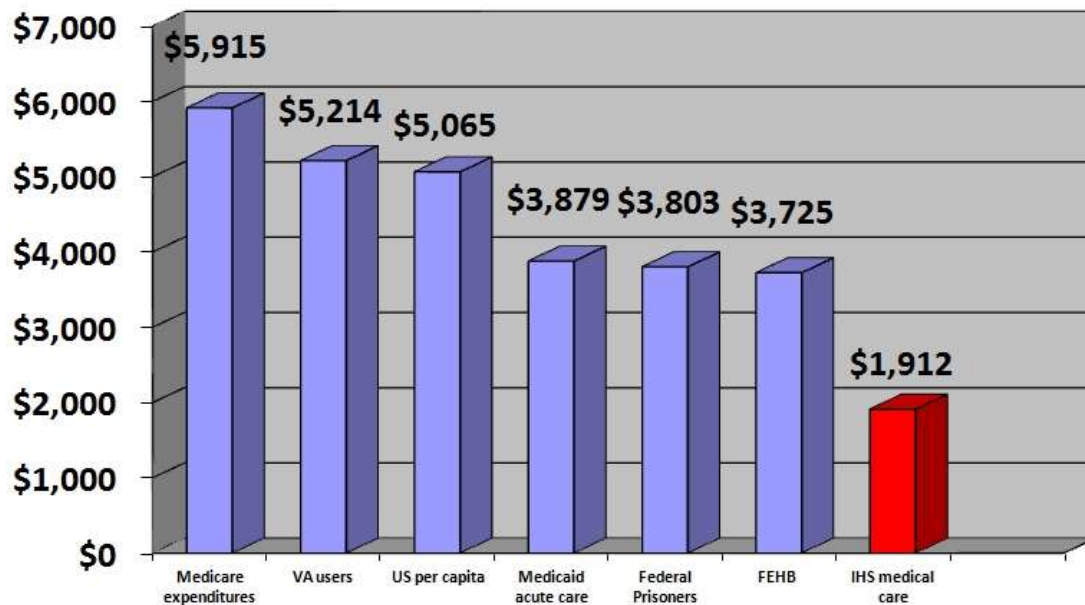


Figure 1.5: Federal health care spending.

In this graph, put together by the United States Commission on Civil Rights, we see that Indian Health Services is the least federally-funded health care (even ranking below federal prisoners). The results of this, also as published in this study, are statistics such as these:

Tuberculosis (500-650% higher than the average non-Native in the U.S.)

- Alcoholism (550-770% higher)
- Diabetes (200-420% higher)
- Unintentional injuries (150-280% higher)
- Homicide (100% higher)
- Influenza and pneumonia (52% higher)
- Suicide (60% higher)

- Heart disease (100%+ higher)
- Infant mortality (150% higher)
- SIDS (400% higher)

These internal struggles then become a drain on Native Nations' resources of both time and money thereby reducing the ability of Native Nations to fight effectively to protect their sovereign status. I will demonstrate in the sections on EBCI and Native Nations history how this tactic has been used on Native Nations in the past as well as how it continues to be used.

The concept of economic violence, on the other hand, often accompanies physical violence, although the primary objective is not bodily violence, but, instead, focuses on the destruction of a primary economic element (generally to the benefit of those enacting the violence), such as agricultural fields or water supplies or factories. One of the most well-known historical cases of this in American culture in the U.S. is the Trail of Tears in which Cherokees, in this particular removal, were forced from their land—i.e., being disposed from their economic base. In this case, there was the horrifying physical violence of the removal and the accompanying concentration camps, but there was also the breaking of the economic base which is done purposefully to cripple another nation by separating its people from a means in which to support themselves (food, schools, medicine, etc.). This is also a case in which the use of economic violence and hegemony also serves another purpose: to sever the autochthony of Native Peoples to their land. First, dissolving the ability of a people to claim “I am from here” leaves the “here” open to be claimed by others. Second, this effect does not apply to just one place (e.g., Georgia for the Cherokees) but can be extrapolated to the whole of the United States. In other words, “If I am no longer from Georgia, then where am I (from)? I am from nowhere,” thus the

removals can be seen as attempting (if the U.S. had accomplished the removal of all Native Nations) to break *all* American Indian claims to being from here, the U.S., at all.

One reason that economic hegemony is so effective is that it can tear down the ability of a nation to form an effective government and, therefore, a stable nation (this is especially salient to discussions of the practice of sovereignty, which I will discuss in Chapter Six). This is where my last concept for Native Nations enters: that of economy-building. I define this as the act of developing an economy with the result being the ability to support the pursuit of nation-building. When discussing economy-building, it is important to understand that it is indeed possible to construct a solid, effective governing body under the thumb of economic hegemony (and, therefore, without a strong economic base) but it is *exponentially* more difficult to achieve. It is also important to notice that you do not need a wealthy economy; you only need a *stable* economy. The effects of economy-building can be seen on many levels from better health care (a healthy citizenship is an active citizenship) to political campaign contributions—an example I will illustrate more fully in my section on sovereignty.

More pragmatically for Native Nations, I hope that this research can add to the discourse and practices of building stable economies. In the past few years, the rarely-highlighted benefits of small, private businesses have begun to be discussed in the tribal economic development literature. These include discussions of the multiplier effect⁹, talent retention, diversification, and psychological impact with accompanying examples of success stories also being highlighted (Jorgensen 2007; Pickering 2004; i.e., they are tackling the problems of brain drain, economic

⁹ The multiplier effect refers to the result of local investment which translates to an even greater increase in a community's income. When one person spends money, it becomes additional income for a second. When the second person spends that money, it becomes additional income for a third, etc. The total group income that results from the continual re-spending is therefore considerably larger than the original amount of money spent. This idea will be discussed further in Chapter 6 (Mastrinana and Hailstones 2001).

drain, psychological inertia, and problems that will be discussed in Chapter Five). These theorists also argue that large tribally-owned enterprises alone cannot meet the challenges of economic development; therefore I claim in this research that it will be the diversity of small, private businesses that will sustain a Native Nation's long-term economy.

For Anthropology

The question of the “Indian problem” (Meriam 1928) has plagued the United States since Europeans first stepped on American Indian land—and the question (as well as the answers) has taken many forms. First, the question was how to “get rid” of the problem (i.e., genocide), then it was how to mask the problem (through assimilation), then how to ignore the problem (by removal), and finally, how to solve the problem (via economic analysis). Of course, these questions are simplified here and were both asked and answered by many different people throughout time, as I will parse out in Chapter Six. American anthropologists have been deeply involved with these questions throughout their time as a discipline and even had their beginnings in the early 1900's practicing salvage anthropology on Native Nations. Today, as applied anthropology and developmental anthropology have become increasingly popular, the “Indian problem” (currently classified as economic under-development) is being directly addressed more frequently. Because of this, it is becoming more important for anthropologists to be able to work in interdisciplinary environments alongside other fields such as sociology, linguistics, political science, and economics.

In respect to “new” decolonization discourses, American anthropologists working with Native Nations are in a uniquely poor situation. How do you effectively make use of post-colonial theory when both you and the people you work with will never experience post-colonialism which, by its nature, cannot exist? My argument is semantic in many ways—how

can there be a “post-“ when we live within, and as products of, these systems?—but the issues are real. In other words, the anthropologist's quandary is that if, as in post-colonial discourse, writing is part of a system of intellectual and political oppression of The Other (Smith 1999), how can you avoid contributing to and perpetuating that oppression if you continue to write about The Other? This quandary is made even more complex if you, as an anthropologist, *are* “The Other” you are working with. This particular aspect points out the flaws still inherent to the discipline of anthropology, which assumes that some sort of Otherness is what we as anthropologists are, and/or should be, studying. When an indigenous anthropologist dares to undertake study as an insider, the exclusionary devices Linda Tuhiwai Smith describes in order to “dismiss the challenges made from outside the fold” are called up. The most common of these is the accusation that the insider does not have the ability to be “objective”—said as if this was the highest standard (or even the most useful) of ethnographic goals. The newer works on Indigenous Anthropologies by indigenous anthropologists (Valerie Lambert, Jean Dennison, Audra Simpson, Renya Ramirez, Kimberly Tallbear, to name a few) are begin to break down some of these constructs.

Just as Native Nation societies can never exist outside the structures of power that they are physically engulfed by, similarly, no form of academic discourse can exist outside, and thus be completely free from, its larger power structures (which, for academics, come in the form of publishing, professorship, etc.; Mihesuah 2004). However, this does not mean that it is all an exercise in futility. Anthropologists (non-indigenous and indigenous alike) must establish a discourse that shows an awareness of the structures that it is working under (e.g., analyzing state

systems like education, semiotic representation issues, and the creation of consent¹⁰) and which does not claim totality and authenticity.

Theories of development anthropology are also strongly woven into this dissertation. And as we conduct research into the issues of development in anthropology it is also imperative that we integrate into these discussions issues of agency. My dissertation advances our social science theoretical understandings in this way with at least two approaches: (1) by examining the significance of small businesses in transforming contemporary debates about our understandings of development and how this relates to issues of economic identity construction, and (2) by demonstrating the relevance of including in ethnographic examinations of contemporary anthropological development projects, which currently focus primarily on tribally-owned businesses, the complex effects of small businesses on reservations. Consequently, the results of this study will contribute to better understandings of not only the role that small businesses play in these economic and cultural representational efforts on reservations, but more broadly it will add to our understandings of how small businesses reflect and contribute to communities within a society.

Furthermore, I also explore broader anthropological concerns regarding questions of identity (e.g., is there an internal construct of “native entrepreneurship”; how are entrepreneurs and small business owners recursively shaped in regards to community identity construction?) and small businesses as the forces of economic and social change. For example, what type of economic impact do small businesses have on reservations? Do these small businesses and

¹⁰ In addition to the creation of consent is the twist of how “consent” is used as a form of resistance. This can be seen in the “Five Civilized Tribes” who believed that by *appearing* to become the colonizer, they could no longer be colonized. Thus begging the question of if this consent really achieved the effect of the individuals seeing this new identity constitution as “real” and whether there really was a strong internalization by the colonized of the discourse of the domination.

entrepreneurs act as agents of change? If so, in what ways does this manifest in their business practices and community involvement? Does citizen-driven economic development differ from tribally-driven economic development? If so, what are the effects on tribal cultural revitalization efforts which are linked with economic development projects, such as those developed by the EBCI government?

Research on American Indian citizen entrepreneurship and small, private¹¹ businesses, specifically, is critical for anthropology not only because we know so little about it, but also because their collective actions help to solve many pressing economic and related social issues. This is achieved through benefits which include: economic impacts such as (1) the multiplier effect which keeps money within the community, (2) increases in the tax base for the tribe, (3) job creation/talent retention, and (4) diversification which provides economic stability, especially for tribes with a single source income, and sociocultural effects such as (5) community inspiration from seeing successful tribal members (e.g., because they can see their fellow community members succeeding, the false notion that one's "Indian-ness" is inherently associated positively with poverty and negatively with success in business begins to disintegrate), (6) quality of life increase (e.g., reduction of long distance travel to buy necessities), and (7) strengthened tribal sovereignty through an increased role of "self-advocacy" (Widenhouse 2010) and reduced dependence on outside funding and policy makers. Specifically for the EBCI, who also own a successful casino, another overarching question became: what (if anything) do these small business owners and their businesses contribute to both the

¹¹ When studying small businesses, it is often assumed that they are privately owned, therefore it would not need to be highlighted. When discussing Native Nations' businesses, though, it is important to clarify which are private and which are tribally-owned since both are prevalent. For this research all small businesses are privately owned and tribally-owned businesses are specified individually.

representation of the EBCI community and economically that their large tribally-owned enterprise alone does not, or is unable to do?

When discussing the casino, however, we must acknowledge that large tribally-owned enterprises not only pose an economic risk due to their lack of financial diversity (specifically when a Native Nation relies on only one or two primary enterprises for their income), but that some are also meant to minister nearly exclusively to those from outside the community (i.e., they are for tourists). This creates the common situation in tourism of having to deliberately decide, as a community via governmental regulations, how to represent yourself as a Native Nation to the non-Native world. In doing so, cultural centers (such as museums) are formed that are not intended for Native citizens as primary users. This begs the question of where/how/what do citizens consider as *their* place for community centers. In Cherokee, we see that the casino has to be designed as a monolithic cultural representation of the EBCI; small businesses, however, have the freedom to represent individual families, communities, or individuals¹².

My dissertation, therefore, puts forward that collectively as well as independently, individuals who own small businesses¹³ on the EBCI's reservation, the Qualla Boundary: (1) contribute in distinct ways to the overall tribal economy that differ from the casino and (2) impact the constructs of identity and cultural representation both as an American Indian and as an Eastern Cherokee Indian. Investigating the economic impact of small businesses on

¹² This is not to imply that individual small business do not portray the EBCI as unidimensional or even Pan-Indian—they most definitely do—but this is rather is an illustration, again, of the diversity that small businesses can provide that one, large institution cannot.

¹³ For the purposes of this study, I will be following the EBCI's own protocol for determining, legally, what a community business is; therefore, these businesses will be those which are physically located on the Qualla Boundary and/or are owned by EBCI citizens who live and/or work on the Qualla Boundary (although it seems contradictory to say that a business is not located on the Qualla Boundary, but the owner works there, this is quite true in some cases, such as consulting firms that work for the EBCI nation). Both of these types of businesses need to be included because both directly contribute to the economic base of the Qualla Boundary.

reservation economies is crucial due to the diversity they provide, which helps sustain the robustness of that economy. Furthermore, the question of economic impact must be addressed in order to investigate the consequences for cultural representation. Specifically, small businesses have to not only be present on said reservation, but also be economically viable—a subject matter that has previously not been researched adequately. Therefore, a viable small business allows an impact not only on issues of cultural reproduction, such as language, but also identity construction, through, for example, impacting perceptions of American Indians as capable business owners. The timing of this project is especially salient as the current economic recession may take its toll on larger tribally-owned, tourist-based, enterprises such as the EBCI’s casino.

For Timing: The Great Recession and the Importance of Small Businesses

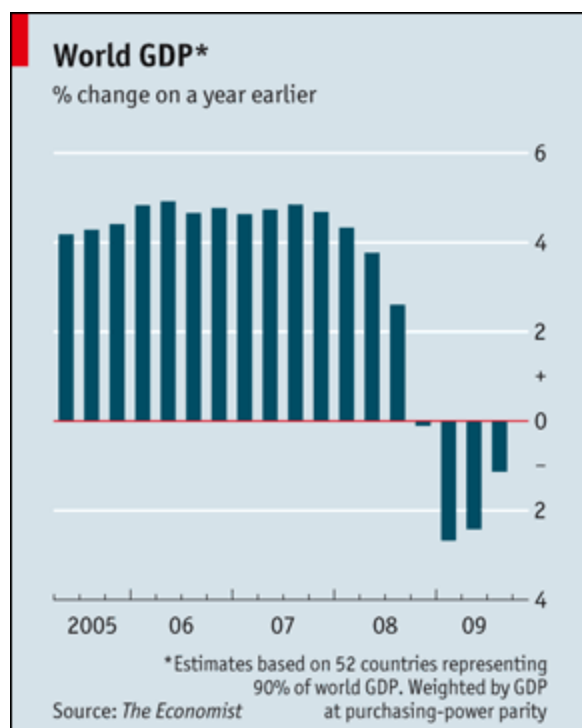


Figure 1.6: World gross domestic product percentage change by year. Reproduced from the Economist Staff 2009.

Although unconventional, I wanted this graph (Figure 1.6) to lead this section of my dissertation. It makes clear and in no uncertain terms the timing, scope, and impact of the Great Recession that hit the world in 2008 in a way that words cannot convey. What it cannot do, however, is truly capture the ramp up period to the recession—a period that was denied by many with larger incomes, but keenly felt by the lower classes; the damage to people’s lives during the recession; and the aftermath as people tried to pull together the pieces of their lives.

I have lived in North Carolina since 2005, but before that my home was just outside of Detroit, Michigan. We were the lucky ones. We finally sold our house after a year of renovation, price dropping, and just plain good luck just as the market began its frightening spiral downward in 2005. Six years later in Michigan there are entire neighborhoods that are now foreclosed on and abandoned. In North Carolina, the picture was a bit rosier—as was anywhere other than Michigan it seemed—but the Great Recession eventually found its way, even to this state consistently voted a top state to live in (for example, Durham, NC ranks number one in CNN Money’s 2010 “25 Best Places to Retire” (Max and Gengler 2010)).

The Great Recession had been in full swing for about a year by the time I moved to the mountains of Western North Carolina. I had been commuting to the Qualla Boundary intermittently for the years preceding that, so I was able to see the changes that were taking place there and in the broader area of the Appalachian Mountains. Gas prices soared to well over four dollars a gallon and unemployment grew to its largest since the Great Depression¹⁴, causing the visitors to the mountains to slow to a trickle. The freeways became nearly empty even on major travel holidays like Memorial Day and Fourth of July. But poverty has never been a stranger to those living in the Southern Appalachians (Tickamyer and Duncan 1990) and business owners

¹⁴ This comparison is difficult to evaluate since measures of unemployment have changed over time, but statisticians generally agree that the magnitudes are on par (Anonymous2009).

had faced times like this before, either personally or through older family members who had carried their businesses through periods like the 1973 OPEC oil crisis. Then, in 2008, the Lehman Brother's corporation crashed and companies across the country began laying off up to three-quarters of their employees.

But in Cherokee, one small business owner chose to go without a salary herself and is thousands of dollars in debt in order to keep her staff employed (Abe 2010). She continued to buy artists' work, albeit in lesser quantities, so their families could eat. And she kept her stores open. This was no easy feat and was not done without anguish or anger as she relayed her story to me. To add salt to the wounds of an already difficult time, that year, 2009, there were two landslides that blocked both major freeway accesses to North Carolina from the west, and a series of snowstorms that blocked the section of the 441 Highway that traverses the park into Tennessee¹⁵. Even if travelers could reach Cherokee by bypassing the landslides, there was no guarantee that they could get home that weekend if an ice storm hit. And in the midst of all of this, banks began refusing to loan money to small businesses. Bank of America was the one of the worst offenders, having taken relief money from the government but then refusing to make loans for under \$50,000 to small businesses (Arriola 2009). Their behavior may have earned them class action lawsuits, but that did nothing to help the businesses struggling to come out on the other side of a dismal year (Service Employees International Union 2012). Again and again, I heard stories from small business owners trying to stay afloat through these years:

¹⁵ According to the Cherokee One Feather, outlying Park entrances were up by 155% the year after my fieldwork, 2011, "due almost entirely to last year's I-40 rockslide that closed the Interstate, drying up traffic to a trickle past I-40 Exit 443, the Foothills Parkway East in Cocke County. The 2011 increases are attributable to much improved weather this year, compared with February 2010. During February 2010, the Park saw record snowfalls which forced the closure of Newfound Gap Road (US 441) overnight on 11 occasions and caused all-day closures on 12 days. February 2011 was much less severe, so the Road was closed overnight on only four occasions and reopened the next morning" (National Parks Service 2011b; National Parks Service 2011a). These statistics and years of records are available on-line at: <http://www.nature.nps.gov/stats/view>.

The problem with the economic stimulus package and everything is that none of that filtered down to us, not a dime. [Nancy Martin, Long House Funeral Home]

It is a tougher year because people aren't spending as much money as they have been. . . . Our customer loyalty you might say, they're still here. It's just people are not spending as much money. . . . They're not buying the higher ticket items. They're splitting plates. [Carl¹⁶, Restaurant manager on Qualla Boundary]

Everybody's doing good this month, but the hotels have been down about 10%. . That, and the shopping. The shops, they're down. . . . And the restaurants are down. And that's the reason the cabins and the campgrounds are up, because you can cook out, or cook your meals in your cabin. [Darlene Waycaster, Cherokee Chamber of Commerce]

[People think that we're becoming millionaires out here. We're not becoming millionaires. We struggle just like everybody else. Artwork is a very volatile market to be in because if the economy goes down, people don't have the money to invest much. If the economy's up, people will buy. It hit us last October, a year ago in October. [But] we made it a year in this economy. [Joel Queen, artist]

This research is about these small businesses that, for the most part, continued to survive during this time providing employment, training, services, and goods to the people in their communities. Their collective actions provided a stable base in a shaky economic world.

For Global Economic Implications

The Great Recession was not confined to the United States, however. Internationally, the timing of this project is especially relevant as the current recession takes its toll on the stability of economic systems worldwide. Consequently, the issues of economic development and economic growth are clearly pressing global issues. And, more broadly in academia, as the role of the individual in economic development begins to be addressed, the role of the private business in community development is also starting to be explored internationally (Gudeman 2001; Williamson, Imbroscio, and Alperovitz 2002). The larger impact of this work will potentially bring into this global dialogue, which seeks a means of stabilization with a focus on

¹⁶ Asked to remain anonymous

locally-based solutions¹⁷, the experience and actions of Native Nations who have engaged these very issues—i.e., rampant unemployment, poverty, instability, etc.—throughout their histories on reservations. As stated above, then, this research demonstrates the stability that these businesses provide to economies during times of shock. Additionally, though, the results of this work (which indicate that small businesses do indeed have sustained, positive impacts) can be applied directly to communities in which one industry dominates the economic base, thus leaving that community vulnerable and potentially powerless if that industry fails. These results can also be applied even more broadly, as they have extensive implications for small communities globally, by providing these communities with another tool to use when planning the best means to support their citizens in creating a vibrant economy that can also sustain their community’s goals.

Why This Has Not Yet Been Done

Stereotypes and Assumptions

In recent years there has been an increasing amount of intellectual and monetary resources dedicated to large tribal enterprises such as casinos or factories. However, many reservations also have thriving private businesses, yet nearly no scholarly attention has been given to this type of American Indian enterprise. This inattention appears to stem from an assumption that there is a lack of private businesses on reservations and a perception of potential problems (ranging from poor location and lack of capital to a cultural “scorn” of entrepreneurship (Smith 2000) that are difficult to overcome.

¹⁷ For example, the national 3/50 Project that encourages consumers to pick three local businesses to shop at and then spend \$50 at each over the month. The result of this would be that \$102 of the \$150 the consumer spends would stay in that community. Their slogan is, “Saving the Brick and Mortars Our Nation is Built On.”

I believe these stereotypes have their roots in the economic violence and continued hegemony that Native Nations have confronted. It is clear from the historical records that American Indians have succeeded on every level of economic strata from extensive prehistoric trade routes, to agriculture, and to business ownership and yet this specter of the financially-incapable American Indian still casts a shadow over Native Nations. The root of this comes from a victim-blaming initiative. The United States has undertaken massive acts of economic violence and economic hegemony (in the forms of removal and the creation of enormous debt for Native Nations and individual American Indians, for example). When the disastrous effects of these efforts were realized, the U.S. then blamed the American Indians for being financially incompetent (e.g., they do not know how to farm or cannot manage their finances) and continue to do so today, all while continuing to severely underfund programs that are owed, dictated by treaty, to Native Nations.

Topics concerning small businesses on reservations have additionally been eschewed by researchers as having little to no aggregate impact on reservation economies. Contradicting this assumption, my research indicates that small businesses can thrive on reservations. Particularly for Native Nations, there is little to no anthropological literature on the actual impacts of small businesses on these issues even though the broader social science literature, including economic, emphasizes the importance of entrepreneurial activities to both of these endeavors. This demonstrates that our lack of information about small businesses has hindered our understandings of not only American Indian people as entrepreneurs, but also our overall understandings of reservation economies. I will be discussing the more insidious public effects of these ideas in Chapter Six.

File Drawer Effect

Due to the dearth of literature available regarding private businesses on reservations, there is a perception in academia that Native American entrepreneurship is a new phenomenon. However, state-licensed American Indian businesses in North Carolina have been quietly operating for almost a century with little notice given to their work.

This leads me to suspect, although by definition it can only be a suspicion, that the File Drawer Effect is also applicable here (Rosenthal 1979). The File Drawer Effect addresses how, in the world of publishing, a “difference” gets noticed and reported. When a topic is being studied and does not find a “difference”—here that would be that American Indians, like other Americans, do own successful small businesses—these findings of uniformity do not get reported because they do not provide exciting and unusual results. Publishing favors these unusual results, so we would expect to hear about the situations with the least or the most small businesses. Locations with a stable number of small businesses are overlooked. These results are then filed away, never to be reported publically. Consequently, the only reports that *do* get published are those that purport the “difference,” even if it may be the exception: that American Indian businesses, *unlike* other American businesses, do *not* exist and/or do *not* succeed. Unfortunately, this leads to an issue in which these poorly supported ideas about what is happening do not coincide with reality, but are then allowed to flourish because no other publications prove otherwise. This then leads to the general conclusion that American Indians do not own businesses regularly and are incapable of having them succeed if they do. The only way to counter the File Drawer Effect is to produce and publish more research to counter (or even support in some cases) these notions if it is indeed so.

CHAPTER 2

THE HOW: METHODOLOGY AND TERMINOLOGY

Terminology

One time this guy came in my store, “Which one is your most accurate book?” and I said – I guess he thought I was going to go sell him a book, “Oh, you need this.” I said, “Sir, I don’t know. These are from different people’s perspectives. I don’t know what’s true or not.” Even if I’ve read it, I can disagree with it. I said, “You got to decide on your own.” I don’t know which one might [be accurate] – none of them may be accurate. We can [sell ten people one book], ten people’s going to have a different story. That’s all I’m saying. [Ron Blankenship, Talking Leaves Bookstore, EBCI citizen]

*Ron Blankenship’s store Talking Leaves is the only store dedicated bookstore in Cherokee. What makes the store remarkable is that it is solely dedicated to American Indian topics and authors. Each wall and shelf is well-stocked and immaculately organized with the latest books, movies, and CDs spanning topics from children’s books written in Cherokee syllabary (such as the newest children’s book *A Very ‘Wendy’ Day*) to the latest academic offerings on topics such as NAGPRA (the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act). These are interspersed with other items such as clothing (like Cherokee High School t-shirts), Pendleton steering wheel covers, locally-made EBCI pottery, American Indian-centric stickers (e.g., “rez diva”), and American Indian-made jewelry—nearly all supplied from American Indian-owned businesses. As you wander through the shelves, music is always playing, ranging from live pow wow CDs to contemporary artists, and they will play any CD so you can decide if you would like to buy it. The store itself is located at the intersection of Highways 441 and 19 flanked by the new movie theater on one side and the*

Oconaluftee Island (home of the enormously popular Children's Trout Derby) on the other, so most tourists and locals drive past at some point on their travels through the town of Cherokee. Like many physical buildings in the mountains, the location is a bit awkward, sitting below the level of the road, overshadowed by a Kentucky Fried Chicken, with one entrance of the plaza at a far end that feels like a 45 angle drop and the other entrance plagued by the constant traffic going past the Island.

I found that I always had to leave significantly more time for Talking Leaves than other stores that I was browsing through. Not only was there always someone to talk to, but I also spent quite a bit of time just making sure that I was abreast of the newest tomes (often, I would find ones I did not realize had been released). Many of these items were not available to Ron at wholesale prices. As he says, "Sometimes, my problem is [that] I'm not getting a discount on some books but I carry them anyway. Sometimes I don't make a dime, but I just call it customer service. Now, I can't afford to sell 1,000 copies of it, but one or two ain't going to kill me, it's just customer service." You might imagine that this kind of dedication would come from someone who has a deep and abiding interest in books, but in this case it was Ron's mother who pestered him year after year (specifically 1992, '93, and '94) to start the bookstore. He claims not be a "reader" although his extensive traveling (200+ nights per year to sell and research new products) compliments his significant appetite for educational magazines., which travel lightly. This, combined with the information he receives from his customers about the books he sells, keeps him far more informed than most about the latest in American Indian works (See figure 2.1).



Figure 2.1: Talking Leaves.

Cultural Revitalization and Cultural Representation

Although I have tried to weave explanations of terminology throughout this dissertation, there are phrases that need more clarification as to why I did—or did not—use them. The first word that I use only sparingly is culture. First, culture tends to be an etic category as used by anthropologists, thus the anthropologist is, as an outsider, labeling a society. Second, culture is used as a singular, static term, i.e., “the culture of . . .” When, in reality, culture truly contains multitudes. Ask any two people to define their collective culture and you will get two divergent answers. This is especially problematic with Native Nations since, in the past, they have been described as “caught between worlds,” “schizophrenic” (Prucha 1985; Finger 1984; Finger 1991), or any number of synonyms that imply that, as American Indians and Americans, they are unsuccessfully straddling two differing cultures. The reality is that having a tribal identity and U.S. national identity is structurally no different than having a U.S. state identity and a U.S. national identity. No one could argue that each U.S. state is a cultural duplicate or that each state’s culture matches

with that of the entire national U.S. culture, yet it is never claimed that those states' inhabitants are "schizophrenic" for trying to balance two identities. The fact is that both of these identity markers are aspects of what they consider, from their point of view, their own singular perception of their culture.

When I use the term culture in this research, I take its context from the community, government, and individual dialogues (e.g., newspapers, interviews, etc.). Naturally, this means that it is not a static term. Each person has their view on what constitutes a part of their culture and this view is constantly in flux, as is the culture itself (Peacock 2001); even something as culturally-specific to Cherokees as language is not always agreed upon as a cultural component¹⁸. This perception on culture was illustrated in Mark Junaluska's paid political ad in which he states that, "I believe that Tradition and Progress are key factors for the continued success of our Tribe" (Junaluska 2009). As I read this statement it called to mind another phrase that I had read regarding the current cultural revitalization plans that specified a request for, "culturally themed streetlights featuring LED technology." This balance of Progress and Tradition encapsulates the complexities of "culture" as a concept and it is in this spirit that I use it.

Similarly to "culture", when terms such as "cultural revitalization" are used in this research, they are used in the context of the EBCI's own circulated publications (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians 2005), rather than as my own pedagogically informative phrases. Consequently, I use the term "cultural revitalization" in the way the nation itself promotes it via these publicized documents (alternatively, when individuals express their opinions on

¹⁸ Many American Indians believed, especially during times of Termination, that speaking their native language was the worst thing that American Indians could do for their long term survival as they believed it prevented their children from integrating, and therefore, succeeding, in the larger American society.

what constitutes “cultural revitalizations” and similar notions, I specify that). This concept is circulated through tribal documents such as their newspaper, the Cherokee One Feather, and is supported monetarily by the Cherokee Preservation Foundation through programs like the Revitalization of Traditional Cherokee Artisan Resources (RTCAR) and language revitalization programs (for example, the Kituwah Immersion Language Academy). Publicized EBCI dialogues regarding the concept of cultural revitalization are primarily constructed around specific programs that will perpetuate and preserve EBCI history, culture, and natural resources including those which bolster EBCI-specific practices that are waning (e.g., language) or those that are being actively recovered (e.g., working with archaeologists to recover lost pottery techniques for EBCI artists to employ).

This concept is strongly connected to their practice of heritage tourism. “Heritage tourism,” as defined by the tribe, is “a concerted community-wide effort to attract more visitors interested in a cultural experience to the Qualla Boundary” (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians 2008b). This “cultural experience” includes their three principal cultural attractions: the Museum of the Cherokee Indian, Qualla Arts and Crafts, and the Cherokee Historical Association which presents the Unto These Hills outdoor drama and the Oconaluftee Indian Village. These heritage tourism attractions intertwine with cultural revitalization efforts as they not only support them monetarily, but also, for example, heavily utilize the Cherokee syllabary and language in highly public areas (such as new road signs in English and Cherokee syllabary) and provide markets for traditional local arts and crafts, thus raising and reinforcing interest in these practices for community members and tourists (See figures 2.2–2.5).



Figure 2.2: Street sign.



Figure 2.3: New Kituwah school sign.



Figure 2.4: Qualla Boundary entrance welcome sign.



Figure 2.5: Yellowhill Community welcome sign and visitor welcome billboard.

Like the term “culture,” however, the term “cultural revitalization” has semantic issues that prevent me from fully embracing it outside of these publicized works. First, it seems to imply that the *current* culture (i.e., the culture that is in need of the revitalization efforts) is not the valid, authentic culture at all or that it is somehow less valuable, relevant, or “real.” Second, this term implies that somehow a culture was lost and now needs to be recovered or that it was languishing like an unwatered plant. In reality, many of these “lost” cultural elements, such as language use, were forbidden, both legally and through violence. In these cases, the term “reclaiming” would be a more accurate description of the processes involved. Cultural revitalization also seems to imply that forgone elements of a culture *should* be revitalized, i.e brought into current practice, which is not always the case. Some cultural ideological notions (and objects) can, and should, be left in the past. I find that a more useful and informative phrase, especially for this research, is “cultural representation.” This phrase conveys the idea both on an individual (e.g., small business owner) and collective (e.g., EBCI government) level that cultural is not stagnant and is created via these “representations” in an ongoing process. It is also useful because it can be an emic or etic

portrayal and thus can be used to analyze how the EBCI projects these representations about themselves and how non-Natives create representations of American Indians (in movies, television, etc.).

Identity

Following my line of reasoning for the previous terms, my conception of identity construction (economic, representational, etc.) mainly draws from the ideas of Stuart Hall and others who emphasizes the “constant transformations” that cultural identities undergo as, “they are subject to the continuous 'play' of history, culture and power” (Rutherford 1990; Holland et al. 1998) and in which, “actual identities are about questions of using the resources of history, language, and culture in the process of becoming rather than being: not ‘who we are’ or ‘where we came from’, so much as what we might become, how we have been represented, and how that bears on how we might represent ourselves” (Hall and Du Gay 1996:4). This conception is also informed by the ideas of community from theorists such as Benedict Anderson who puts forth that, “Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined” (Anderson 2007:6). The concept of identity, like culture, is individualistic, so in the body of this work I will specify who is using this term and in what context (an individual’s identity, the EBCI’s identity construction, etc.).

What is an Entrepreneur

You might say it was more or less my aspiration to hopefully one day be an entrepreneur. [Carl, Restaurant manager on Qualla Boundary, Non-EBCI citizen]

The entrepreneur is sort of the visionary out front looking for new things to do, new problems to deal with. [Rich Panther, Workplace Solutions, EBCI citizen]

I think we've maybe done thirty dollars [today] and people want to think that we're rolling in it. They have no fucking clue. [Abe¹⁹, local business owner]

As Abe so succinctly tells us here, the perception of the entrepreneur does not always match with the harsh realities. “Entrepreneurship” is the new hot topic of this decade and, as such, it is critical to understanding my work. Outside of my research, I am barraged by the concept multiple times each day. In the morning, my email inbox has a message about the new UNC Entrepreneurial Public Service (EPS) Fellowship. Later, on campus our Chancellor gives a talk on “Innovation and the Entrepreneurial University” based on his book “The Engines of Innovation: The Entrepreneurial University in the Twentieth Century.” In the accompanying brochure, it is stated that, “The entrepreneurial emphasis on ‘knowledge that contributes to a better world’ suggests the need for more interdisciplinary work, more collaborative projects among faculty and with partners outside the University, more ‘problem-based’ research, and more engagement with public policies”²⁰. When I check my physical mailbox, the standard “sponsor a child” requests for contributions has now been revamped into “Your gift of \$25 or more will help provide a first loan to a deserving entrepreneur” (The Coca-Cola Company 2010). Later on television there is an advertisement for the new Coca-Cola “5 by 20” campaign. As the web address states, Coke has pledged to empower five million women entrepreneurs by 2020²¹.

¹⁹ Asked to remain anonymous

²⁰ This comes at an interesting time when books like “University, Inc.” are red flagging the issues that come with linking universities to corporations and the “capitalist” mindset that competes with the stated purposes of universities.

²¹ This can be viewed here: http://www.thecoca-colacompany.com/dynamic/press_center/2010/09/the-coca-cola-company-pledges-to-empower-5-million-women-entrepreneurs-by-2020.html . What this actually means is that they are hiring and training five million women to be their rural distributors, thus furthering the reach of their product into even the smallest villages.

What is interesting about these cases, and many others, is that the concepts they are espousing are not new by any standards, but were never linked to the term “entrepreneur(ial)” before. College students (especially since the founding of the Peace Corps at the University of Michigan after a speech given there by John F. Kennedy) are regularly called on to contribute to “public service projects;” interdisciplinary and problem-relevant work have been some of the most long-running discussions in academia; and hiring laborers for the distribution of products is as old as the first trade networks in history. The word “entrepreneur” in these examples is being used in a specific way and is meant to evoke a specific ideology. The question is, of course, what is it? What does the word entrepreneur do for agendas that are being promoted today? What does this mean for our understanding of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs? What is the lure of the term “entrepreneurialism” or the “entrepreneurial ethic” (Colloredo-Mansfeld 1999)? What does it add to our current discourses on responsibility and individualism in business (as emphasized in these advertisements)? And how does this tie in with the formations of American Indian economic identities? These questions are crucial for my work because many of the public dialogues about small business ownership today come in the guise of entrepreneurialism. For example, most beginners’ “entrepreneurial” classes, as opposed to “small business” classes, are nearly interchangeable, with the content for both being the same, but the appearance (as seen in various listservs such as the SBA, local colleges, etc.) of entrepreneurial courses is rising due to the term’s popularity. Therefore, it is important, as I delve into the world of small business ownership, to include discussions of entrepreneurial activities and events into my research. But the definitions of what an entrepreneur is are vague at best and contradictory in many writings.

The academic studies on defining the entrepreneur as a central figure of study began in earnest with Schumpeter in 1934 whose definition was focused on innovation. Others followed over the years adding to this description facets such as: takes initiative, desire for responsibility, an authority, ambitious, independent, self-confident, need for achievement, drive, autonomy, need for power, energetic, goal-oriented, and growth-oriented (Carland, Boulton, and Carland 1984). Carland takes these various characteristics and folds them into several labels:

- *Small business venture*: A small business venture is any business that is independently owned and operated, not dominant in its field, and does not engage in any new marketing or innovative practices.
- *Entrepreneurial venture*: An entrepreneurial venture is one that engages in at least one of Schumpeter's four categories of behavior: that is, the principal goals of an entrepreneurial venture are profitability and growth and the business is characterized by innovative strategic practices.
- *Small business owner*: A small business owner is an individual who establishes and manages a business for the principal purpose of furthering personal goals. The business must be the primary source of income and will consume the majority of one's time and resources. The owner perceives the business as an extension of his or her personality, intricately bound with family needs and desires.
- *Entrepreneur*: An entrepreneur is an individual who establishes and manages a business for the principal purposes of profit and growth. The entrepreneur is characterized principally by innovative behavior and will employ strategic management practices in the business.

I find these common definitions unsatisfying in several ways. It is odd to me that they chose to say that a small business could not be innovative or dominant in its field. First, there are few businesses that could survive long-term without some sort of innovation whether it be in technologies for manufacturing (or the technology of the item), in aesthetics, or in other areas. For long-standing tourist businesses in Cherokee, this means finding new ways to

attract customers or researching new marketing techniques to get the word out to locals. Many of the stores in Cherokee would also be considered dominant in their field—their field’s just happen to be smaller than most (e.g., Talking Leaves, an American Indian-focused bookstore). I would also posit, in response to these typical definitions, that it would be hard to be a successful entrepreneur if you did not have your business consuming the majority of your time and resources and, most likely, as your primary source of income²².

In popular circulations of the term “entrepreneur,” such as the initial examples above, an entrepreneur can be distinguished by his or her innovation and risk-taking abilities even though, in reality, differences in risk-taking behaviors between small business owners and entrepreneurs have not been found (Carland, Boulton, and Carland 1984). But in the public today, entrepreneurialism is not only sexier than small business ownership, it is evocative of the “pull yourself up by your bootstraps” and “American Dream” mentality that is circulated in political propaganda and, thus, regularly touted as a positive pursuit. Entrepreneurs are continually represented as innovative, eccentric, problem solvers who, inevitably, end up owning large corporations and become incredibly wealthy (it is also important to note that they are also nearly always represented in popular media by white males, i.e., Bill Gates, Donald Trump, Richard Branson, Steve Jobs, etc.). When trying to attract people to the idea of business ownership, this is obviously a much easier sell than the idea of being merely a small business owner in which the word “small” seems to limit your potential.

²² This is the same problem that I see frequently in various literatures with the rote separating out of “family businesses” as non-entrepreneurial. In this case, the ingenuity in maintaining a family business is undermined as it is portrayed in these definitions as a stagnant entity. Each generation of family ownership is different (in consumer needs, technologies, etc.). Therefore, in order to survive, a family business must be “entrepreneurial” (by the above definitions) in order to continue its success.

Methodology

I have spent a cumulative fifteen months, to date, on the Qualla Boundary for this research. My methodology in examining these questions about small businesses included participant-observation field research: networking with small businesses, their customers, and residents in order to select individuals for formal interviews. This was followed by approximately 30 formal structured and semi-structured interviews (those conducted with business owners are in some cases considered to be entrepreneurial-, or anti-entrepreneurial-, autobiographies); and observation of public events which concerned small business owners, such as those hosted by the Chamber of Commerce and the tribal council. These interviews address and explore the questions of how EBCI identities and representations are promoted through this entrepreneurial economic development project by both the tribal government and its citizens, what conflicts may arise as a result of this reformation process, and how the EBCI addresses these conflicts both as a nation and as individuals. Although I did not undertake formal interviews with tourists for this research, many reports and surveys have been conducted by various economic development groups and the EBCI about tourists to Qualla Boundary and the GSMNP (Evans, Dave, and Stoddard 2007; The Marketing Workshop 2007; Stynes, Hornback, and Propst 2010). In addition, the many hours I spent in tourist-focused stores, talking with owners about and observing tourists, was enlightening. In fact, it is difficult to avoid the continual stream of tourists when conducting “on-season” research in the town of Cherokee.

Some of my interviewees requested to remain anonymous and I have given them pseudonyms as a result. I have randomized the genders in these instances since keeping the genders matched would identify the store owner due to the intimate nature of this business

community. My research also included conversational analysis via formal data gathering via archival documents, particularly the Cherokee One Feather, regarding small business ownership and activities. This combination of methods allowed me to use triangulation methods in many cases (i.e., interview-focus group-participant observation, interview-conversational analysis-participant observation, etc.). Analysis of my data is being conducted with Nvivo software. Additionally, my research has been approved by the UNC-CH IRB office (approval # 09-0194) and the EBCI IRB office. I chose the EBCI's Qualla Boundary for my dissertation because it is ideally suited for my research questions in many ways: the manageable size of its land base and size of its population, its location near at the entrance of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park—the United States' most-visited national park, its long history of private business ownership, the current growth of the private business market, and a new tribal government interest in supporting private businesses and encouraging entrepreneurial efforts, some of which includes providing courses geared towards educating school-aged children.

Specifically, the EBCI is a federally-recognized Native Nation located in western North Carolina on the 100 square-mile Qualla Boundary. There are over 14,182 enrolled citizens, 8,092 of whom live on the reservation (Lambert and Leitner 2011). The EBCI have had a flourishing (licensed) tourism business since the 1920's due to their location at the entrance of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and on the Blue Ridge Parkway, which is driven by over 18 million people every year. Recently, in 1997, they also opened the successful Harrah's Casino (an enterprise of the EBCI, managed by Harrah's Entertainment, Inc.). This has become the EBCI's leading income source and North Carolina's number one attraction, drawing 3.6 million visitors annually. It has also made the EBCI the number one

employer in western North Carolina (McKie 2011i). In addition, according to their economic development office, retail sales on the reservation grew 35% from 1997 to 2004 and are expected to rise as per capita payments from the casino to EBCI citizens increase and renovations to the tourist industry (including the casino additions) are completed. This means that there are an increasing number of people visiting the reservation and more money being spent by both tourists and tribal citizens. Thus the economic space for privately owned businesses is expanding and the opportunities for success are also growing (Finger 1984; Finger 1991; Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians 2008b).

Because of this growth, the EBCI government is beginning to develop an incentive program for incubating private businesses on its reservation and has also begun to dedicate resources toward the support of its existing private businesses in projects ranging from Main Street revitalization projects to small business loans. This emphasis on entrepreneurial development also includes programs, such as their small business entrepreneurial skills and training course, “Paving Our Own Way,” which is geared towards educating children aged 8-12. For these younger children, there are even career fairs consisting of local entrepreneurs and businesses designed to, “to expose elementary students to career information and the occupational choices in their community” (Dingus 2009). For high school students, events like the Cherokee High School Business Plan Competition, (open to 11th and 12th grade students; Cherokee Preservation Foundation 2011) and the new American Indian Business Leaders (AIBL)²³ organization (Bradley 2011) motivate students to think about starting their own businesses. It is also important to note that although this tribal policy is being developed to bolster private businesses, my preliminary research suggests that such policies are

²³ AIBL’s primary focus is to use its student foundation to assist tribal economic growth and stability through and emphasis in maintaining culturally-appropriate American Indian business development.

augmenting what individuals have created and established previously and are simply continuing an historical (Finger 1991:246) and economic trajectory that was already defined by individuals. My research explores these and other transformations of the conditions under which individually-owned businesses operate and will place these businesses within a broader social and economic history of extensive and sustained creation of business opportunities by EBCI citizens. Through this I am able to show that EBCI citizens have been and still are a prominent force for economic and social change.

The structure of my overall methodology was designed to parse my research questions regarding the categories of economic impact and identity constructions. My methodology therefore addresses the following specific subsets of design questions:

Economic Impact

In order to determine the viability of these businesses as well as their economic impact specific to the EBCI, I gathered data from the EBCI Budget and Finance Division and interviews with business owners to answer

- (1) how these businesses contribute to overall economic development (e.g., employment, training for their employees, etc.)
- (2) how these small businesses contribute to the overall diversity of the EBCI economy (i.e., what are types of businesses located on the Qualla Boundary),
- (3) how they were being impacted during this economic recession²⁴. Surprisingly, my findings here indicate that, while I was in the field, the number of small businesses doubled from approximately 300 to 600 during the recession from 2008 to 2009. Although most existing businesses felt the impact of this recession in some way, many also had tactics to mitigate the impact via hours and inventory adjustments and were thus able to sustain themselves. Additionally, contrary to the widely held idea that small businesses on the Qualla Boundary primarily serve tourists, less than half

²⁴ A subset of this question is how both small businesses *and* the casino were being impacted, if at all, during this economic recession. If there is a significant impact to the casino, do we see the presence of small businesses mitigating the overall economic shock? If there is a significant impact to small businesses, how does this manifest?

are actually marketed towards tourists (Walker 2010). The scope of this diversity is represented in my interviews, which range from business consulting firms to restaurants,

(4) in what conditions historically (both economically and politically) have these businesses thrived or failed in order to determine not only what wider economic patterns contribute to success or failure, but to also contribute to understandings about what political climates aid or hinder small business growth, and

(5) are there negative impacts and/or conflicts that arise from small businesses and entrepreneurial efforts (e.g., is money leaving the community via outside ownership and thus a drain on the economy or are there *negative* effects competing with tribal cultural revitalization efforts?).

Identity Construction

This second set of questions concerns the dimensions of small business ownership that intersect with issues of identity formation in the vein of previous authors (Della-Guista and King 2006; Basu 2006). This information was gathered primarily from interviews with business owners and EBCI employees as well as documents, such as the One Feather newspaper. In order to see how small businesses are interrelated with the issues of identity construction I explored the following categories:

(1) Who owns these businesses (tribal citizens or non-citizens, age, families or individuals, education level)? Another important facet of identity that I will address in detail later was that many businesses were owned by large familial groups. Some of these businesses, though, were no longer owned by enrolled citizens due to marriages producing children who did not meet the minimum blood quantum of 1/16th required by the EBCI for citizenship, resulting in many socioeconomic ramifications.

(2) The physical manifestations of their cultural representational efforts (e.g., menus in Cherokee syllabary and products such as locally crafted art, informational/instructional books about the Cherokee), spaces created (e.g., as gathering areas, spaces for traditional language use, etc.), and supply of items specifically targeted for local consumption (supplies for artists, ceremonial supplies, etc.) as well as whether these are also manifested in the casino and, if so, to what extent. In summary, I found that most businesses included some of these components that contributed to cultural representational efforts, which ran the gamut from serving foods of Cherokee origin (in recipe) such as bean bread, or helping employees with Cherokee language training. For businesses serving the tourist or tourist/local crossover populations, the most prominent products asserting a cultural representation

were crafts—i.e., baskets, jewelry, carvings, etc.). Even stores that did not specialize in arts and crafts (restaurants, bookstore, live animal shows, etc.) sold some Cherokee-themed items on a seasonal basis or small trinkets like beaded jewelry. Cherokee syllabary was just coming into public signage use in 2009 and now nearly every public sign in Cherokee is also in the syllabary. At the same time, it was becoming more popular to have items available in syllabary and English: Tribal Grounds had their menu printed in both, while Cherokee By Design (discussed in Chapter Two) features the syllabary prominently in their ceramics, and now even t-shirts feature it. The next largest group of products is books and CDs. Most of the stores in this genre sold books either about the Cherokee/EBCI or about tracing your ancestry to the Cherokee, as well as music from local artists such as Walker Calhoun and Bo Taylor. For non-tourist businesses, the physical cultural representations ranged from items like Pendleton-lined funeral caskets to offering “by EBCI citizens for EBCI citizens” services. Items targeted for local consumption (e.g., corn beads for crafts, wood for carving, etc.) could be found in both tourist- and locals-targeted stores, although this category was less represented in the market since the target population is obviously smaller. As for space creation, a few stores deliberately created spaces to be used by EBCI citizens (e.g., Tribal Grounds’ reserved meeting room), but for the most part, EBCI citizens chose to create their own “locals” spaces (e.g., the weekly elders’ Cherokee speakers’ breakfasts held at places such as Peter’s Pancake House, which all speakers/learners could attend).

(3) The current conflicts regarding entrepreneurship in the community. Since conflicts can be indicators of important issues within a society, I needed to ascertain whether there were conflicts surrounding entrepreneurship, specifically in the areas of class inequalities, social capital, citizenship versus community membership demarcations, and also the politics of belonging and related issues of access to material and symbolic resources (and if there were, how are these conflicts resolved?). I found here that the most common conflicts were centered on family-business issues (i.e., access to resources) and issues of citizenship

(4) For scope, what are the other non-small business cultural revitalization and identity formation domains and what are their impacts (this would include venues such as the Cherokee museum), and

(5) In addressing the tourism industry, I needed to answer: what effects does a tourist-based business versus a community-oriented business have on issues of identity construction both within and outside that community; is the success of a business related to its promotion of cultural representations (such as those listed in the “B” section above); what are the consequences of this impact for other types of businesses on the Qualla Boundary (are strictly tourist-based businesses less stable?); and what are the consequences of this impact for business-community relations? In recent years I have found that there has been a marked shift in interest from opening a tourist-based business (considered an easy option due to the amount of tourism present on Cherokee) to opening locally-focused businesses.

Governmental Activities

Finally, I look at the governmental activities in the realm of small business promotion and evaluated how these activities reflect the overall tribal views and issues concerning cultural revitalization efforts and cultural representation. For this section, my information comes from the employees at the Sequoyah Fund Office, Cherokee Business Development office, Office of Budget & Finance's Revenue Office, the Office of Planning and Development, the Economic Development Office, the Cherokee Chamber of Commerce, the Cherokee Preservation Foundation, and, interviews with the business owners (see Appendix A). To do this I examine

(1) who are the administrators creating the new small business development programs which are specifically geared towards small business promotion,

(2) how these new tribal entrepreneurial development programs alter the physical landscape of existing private businesses (either through the physical location or through the products sold),

(3) in terms of tribal policy: in what ways does the tribal government link economic development, including their own entrepreneurial development programs, with cultural revitalization efforts (e.g., , in the realm of regulation, bylaws recently enacted will alter the image of the Qualla Boundary with new signage and storefronts designed to project a specifically Cherokee, rather than pan-Indian, image; loans will be furnished by the EBCI government for businesses to refurbish their facades in an approved tribal “heritage tourism” format); how effective is this type of policy for the success of entrepreneurial efforts; how do these policies constrain or facilitate the agency of small business owners; and how do these policies reflect the visions of future identity construction of the EBCI for tribal citizens? and

(4) what these programs and the subsequent creation of new business owners mean for transforming the visions of the future of the Qualla Boundary economically, politically, and socially.

The new governmental programs I studied, managed nearly entirely by EBCI members, were just beginning to develop, but already had great success in providing training, from starting a business to “greening” it, to many of the owners (future and current) I spoke

with. In the course of collecting this data and working with these offices, I examined the economic functions and consequential effects of the new tribal business support centers which will include investigating incentives to small businesses that locating on the Qualla Boundary offers, such as limited taxation, tax credits, ready loans (micro of \$10,000 and less, large loans of up to \$150,000), training, and the advanced infrastructure of the BalsamWest FiberNET carrier-grade fiber-optic network (which is owned in partnership by the EBCI and will be discussed further in Chapter Five). I also looked at how these new business support centers impact identity formation issues through such programs as the new Cherokee Cultural Branding initiative. A key question this research will address regarding these tribal programs is if and how small businesses have utilized the EBCI's new small business services and why or why not (to be determined through interviews specified below)?

My thesis that small, private businesses diversify, stimulate, and sustain the economy as well as provide space for cultural and social constructions is informed in part by the anthropological literature that treats the individual as a critical agent of social change. It is also informed by the work of social theorists on issues of agency, and by American Indianists who recognize American Indian activism and cultural revitalization as projects conceived, designed, and carried out by individuals rather than by seemingly agentless whole societies. Additional categories of literature that have inspired my work, and to which I hope to contribute, are those on the anthropology of development and economic anthropology. These sources specifically include American Indian entrepreneurship, tribal economic development, and global economic development.

Finally, I have also included interdisciplinary works in economics, sociology, and political science that support the research being done on small businesses in particular.

Drawing from the literature in economics, many researchers are inquiring into the needs of small businesses (Seley 1981). Specifically, they are examining small businesses located in rural settings (Variyam and Kraybill 1994; Gladwin et al. 1989) and also the effect of federal assistance on those small businesses (Berblinger 1993). In addition, initial econometric examinations of small business development programs on reservations, in this case the Rosebud Sioux reservation, have shown results of sustainable raises in real per capita income (Pickering 2004; Benson et al. 2009). In political science, emphasis is now being placed on economic development issues with a focus on collaborative efforts toward economic development (Cantor 1990). There are also interesting new examinations of other, “ideological programme[s] of reform intended to promote entrepreneurial values among citizens” (Della-Guista and King 2006; Basu 2006). Finally, in sociology research is being done on the issues of ethnicity and entrepreneurship (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990).

CHAPTER 3

BACKGROUND

Introduction

Joel Queen is arguably one of the most famous contemporary EBCI artists, having won local and national awards including those coveted at the Santa Fe Southwestern Association for Indian Arts. The day I met with him had been a difficult one and, although always polite and agreeable in conversation, he spoke plainly and with a furrowed brow about his perceptions of working with the bureaucracy of the tribal government. I asked if his family, well-respected artists themselves, had had the same issues that he has now and he responded that, “The modernization of the tribe has brought them a lot of legal issues that nobody’s willing to answer yet.”

Joel’s gallery, incorporated in 2005 with his wife Kelly (who graduated with a business degree at the same time Joel finished his Master’s in Fine Arts), is located just off of the Qualla Boundary on the main highway leading directly to downtown Cherokee. When he was just out of high school, Joel opened his first gallery on Main Street in Cherokee. It was a tiny room and, in retrospect, he says that he was probably too young to know “what was going on” business-wise. So, as an adult he decided to locate to a place with less direct competition in such close proximity (such as with the Qualla Arts & Crafts Mutual Co-Op) and fewer leasing hassles. The new gallery itself is a small log cabin-style building close to road and next to a brand new veterinary facility (the only in Cherokee). As you enter the building, on your right is Joel’s office and work studio, filled with intricately designed pots waiting to be finished and fired and paperwork and books lining the walls. To your left is the store featuring not only Joel’s works, but also other local and national American Indian

artists. The small room houses a variety of crafts that Joel has trained himself in over the years, including gemstone setting for jewelry as well as pictures of him at work digging up clay for his prized black pottery pieces (a grueling part of the job that, even as a young man still under forty, has left him facing six surgeries).

That day, though, what weighed heaviest on his mind were his dealings with TERO (the Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance) which governs the hiring of American Indian-owned businesses by Native Nations (See figure 3.1).



Figure 3.1: Joel Queen Gallery.

EBCI History

Originally, the Cherokee Nation's territory extended into what are now the states of Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, South Carolina, North Carolina, and to a lesser degree Kentucky and Virginia (Perdue 2007:xiii). Beginning in 1721, treaties whittled away this land base, and in the 1820s the states in which the Cherokee Nation lay, especially Georgia,

began to take measures to force the Cherokees west of the Mississippi River. In 1830 Congress passed the Indian Removal Act that authorized the president to negotiate the removal of Indians east of the Mississippi. In its aftermath, two key U.S. Supreme Court cases established the relationship between states, the federal government, and the Cherokee Nation. In *Cherokee Nation v. Georgia* (1831), the Cherokee Nation sought status as a “foreign state” and an injunction against Georgia, which was extending oppressive state laws over them in violation of their tribal sovereignty. Although they lost this case in the sense that they were not declared a “foreign state” (and, thus, could not sue Georgia as one) the court did declare them a “domestic dependant nation,” thus defining a legal status for Native Nations. *Worcester v. Georgia* (1832) soon followed this case when the Georgia Guard arrested Samuel Worcester and Elizur Butler after they refused to recognize Georgia’s state law prohibiting whites from living within the Cherokee Nation without taking an oath of allegiance to the state. This case was a victory for Worcester, but the missionaries were not freed from prison until two years later when they agreed to leave the state.

These court decisions did little to aid the Cherokees in their fight against removal. Although these American Indian removals were legal under the Indian Removal Act, the Cherokees who signed the Treaty of New Echota, which provided for the Nation’s removal, did not have the authority to do so (Perdue 2007) thereby making their removal, in the eyes of the Cherokee Nation, illegal. There was no official death toll from the Trail of Tears—or more accurately called in the Cherokee language Nu-na-hi Du-na Tlo-hi-lu-yi (syllabary: ᏎᏉᏯ ᏍᏈ ᏪᏚᏳᏰᏱ)—, but estimates as a result of this process of relocation (1838-1839) to concentration camps within their homeland and then to the Indian Territory, what is now Oklahoma suggest that approximately 4,000 lives were lost (Thornton 1987:177). During this

tumultuous time, some Cherokees continued to live in the mountains of North Carolina and others fled from the relocation efforts to there. The descendants of many of these Cherokees would later be recognized as the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians²⁵. At this time the Cherokees living east of the Mississippi greatly feared forced removal and for the safety of their land. The Cherokees living in western North Carolina shielded themselves from the brunt of the removal efforts by asserting land and citizenship claims.

The Cherokee Nation was politically active and legally astute (Perdue 2007) and had been, therefore, very much aware of the possibility that their efforts to combat removal could fail. The Cherokees living in North Carolina, specifically the core group of Qualla Indians who would later become the EBCI (Lambert 2011b:xxi, 4-7), resisted removal by pursuing their claims to North Carolina citizenship based on the previous land treaties of 1817 and 1819 (Finger 1984:41, 83; Perdue 2007:126)²⁶. These treaties permitted heads of Cherokee families to remain in western North Carolina and apply for 640-acres of land. The state of North Carolina finally permitted the North Carolina Cherokees to remain and not be removed in 1837 (Perdue 2007:126). Unfortunately, the matter of citizenship would continue to be in conflict for the North Carolina Cherokees as the federal government periodically affirmed their citizenship (via a series of acts of Congress through 1930) while the state of North Carolina refused to acknowledge them as state citizens (including refusing them the right to vote). Part of this flux would be resolved when the federal government formally recognized

²⁵ They were comprised of the Qualla Indians, living distantly into the mountains, and the Cherokee Nation Indians living near New Echota (Perdue 2007).

²⁶ At this time, and until the 14th amendment, it was states rather than the federal government that conferred citizenship and previous treaties did not guarantee citizenship, thus making it necessary to use a combination of tactics to remain in North Carolina. Furthermore, different groups of Cherokees (i.e., the Qualla Indians, the Cherokee nation citizens in North Carolina, etc.) pursued a variety of these strategies to remain in North Carolina.

the North Carolina Cherokees as distinctly from the Cherokee nation in 1868, but it would not be until 1946, after continuously fighting the state of North Carolina for nearly 100 years, that North Carolina granted the EBCI full and practicing state citizenship, thus allowing them to vote.

With their citizenship status clouded, the North Carolina Cherokees needed a stable solution to the issue of their land ownership. William Holland Thomas,²⁷ a white North Carolinian lawyer and businessman who had been a lifelong ally to the North Carolina Cherokees, was a prominent figure in the North Carolina Cherokees' history, especially during their legal battles of this era. The North Carolina Cherokees' solution to the land dilemma was to work with Thomas to buy large amounts of land on their behalf, totaling nearly 50,000 acres by 1842 (Finger 1984:188), in his name using both his money and monies owed to the North Carolina Cherokees by the federal government. Thomas's purchases created a legally recognized and relatively cohesive tribal land base.

In order to protect the common ownership of the land, the North Carolina Cherokees incorporated for the first time in 1847 as the Sugar and Silk Cherokee Company. This was accomplished by a proclamation from the governor due to lack of incorporation laws in North Carolina at that time (Finger 1984:45, 155). This tribal incorporation put the North Carolina Cherokees in a peculiar legal position even among other Native Nations. Unfortunately, Thomas ultimately held the land as its trustee. After the Civil War, Thomas's mounting debt, both taxes and personal, along with health problems overwhelmed him and a

²⁷ In reference to William Holland Thomas, much is debated about the role he played in the affairs of the EBCI. He clearly was a key figure in procuring land on their behalf and representing their affairs in Washington DC, but the EBCI also had to eventually sue him to release the land to them and his representation was not free. I have chosen not to focus much of my time here on Thomas because I believe that doing so detracts from the tremendous amount of work being done politically and economically by the EBCI and citizens themselves in this tumultuous time period.

lender eventually claimed Thomas's land-holdings. The federal government filed a law suit on behalf of the EBCI in 1873 (Finger 1984:119) and the court ultimately conferred the land's ownership (and outstanding debts) to the EBCI. It would not be until 1925 that the federal government would take trusteeship over EBCI land, thus relieving them of the state property taxes they had paid since the Trail of Tears (Finger 1984)²⁸.

The issue of internal EBCI membership and citizenship through the years was as complicated as their land status. The EBCI incorporated once again in 1889 under the newly implemented North Carolina incorporation laws. This charter of incorporation and its amendment in 1895, Section 22, to include a 1/16th minimum blood quantum for rights to EBCI assets was significant as it would serve as the EBCI's governing document, thus helping solidify them as a political body. Three censuses occurred after this (1907 Council Roll, 1908 Churchill Roll, 1909 Guion Miller Roll), each heavily contested. One reason for this contestation was the common practice of paying a lawyer a fee plus a commission to fight for an individual's inclusion on American Indian rolls (Finger 1984; Adams 2012:46)—thus popularizing the term “five dollar Indian.” Additionally, economic incentives brought about by timber shares, land allotments, and court-ordered treaty recompenses added to the scramble for placement on the EBCI rolls. It was the next census, the 1924 Baker Roll, which would become the base roll for the EBCI.

The U.S. government, specifically a man named Fred A. Baker, determined who would be included in the Baker Roll and this determination had no requirement for EBCI approval. However, the EBCI tribal council did negotiate many elements of the rolls including the inclusion of specific individuals. Despite this EBCI council involvement,

²⁸ The EBCI citizens prefer to call their land base the “Boundary” rather than a reservation to reflect the differentiation that this land was not reserved to them from a cession but land they bought.

though, Baker ultimately choose to ignore the EBCI's 1889 charter stipulating citizenship criteria of 1/16th minimum blood quantum in favor of 1/32nd and sometimes even lower (Finger 1991). Additionally, the economic incentives for being placed on the EBCI rolls meant that during the Baker Roll determination the EBCI had nearly 12,000 additional individuals applying for inclusion. After congress asserted that it alone (not individuals, i.e., census takers, or even the nations themselves) determined EBCI citizenship qualifications, the Baker Roll was finalized in 1928 and consisted of 3,157 citizens²⁹ (Adams 2012).

The subject of blood quantum and citizenship began for the EBCI, and other Native Nations, enmeshed in controversy and remains so today. The Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma (like almost 100 other federally recognized Native Nations) has never used a minimum blood quantum for citizenship purposes and has instead based its citizenship on lineal descent from the Dawes Rolls of 1906, stating, "All citizens of the Cherokee Nation must be original enrollees or descendants of original enrollees listed on the Dawes Commission Rolls"³⁰, (Cherokee Nation 1999). However, the much smaller nation of the EBCI (approximately 14,000 versus 300,000 Cherokee Nation citizens) has primarily continued to use a 1/16th blood quantum minimum as calculated from the Baker Roll as a basis for citizenship and has audited their rolls and amended their charters over the years (these occurred in 1967, 1986, and 2009 (Finger 1991; McKie 2009a)) to determine whether there exists enrolled citizens who do not meet the EBCI's criteria for citizenship. As these examples demonstrate, the complexities of citizenship and land boundaries are numerous; in the following sections I

²⁹ It is important to note here that the purpose of these rolls, brought together by the U.S. government, was not meant to serve as a vehicle for the use of Native Nations citizenship determination, but rather was to be used as a vehicle for the dissolution of these Native Nations through exclusions, allotments, etc.

³⁰ In addition, the primary criteria of being able to trace your lineal descendency to the Dawes Rolls also means that an applicant's parents do not have to be enrolled citizens for an applicant to become a Cherokee Nation citizen.

will illustrate how these complexities are experienced by individuals today through a focus on the role of the small businesses of the EBCI.

EBCI Government's Current Legal Standing and What They Can Provide to Businesses

I've got a sign up or I used to have one back there that said, "The only thing that's more overrated than natural childbirth is being self-employed." [Teresa, Granny's restaurant, EBCI citizen]

This historical context brings us to the EBCI government today and the aspects of what it can offer to its small business ventures. On October 5th 2009, the new members of the EBCI Tribal Council were sworn into office. The Tribal Council was headed by (in the Executive Branch, serving a four-year term) Principal Chief Michell Hicks and Vice Larry Blythe (McKie 2009c). Twelve representatives serve two-year terms in the Legislative Branch of the EBCI, composing the Tribal Council. Each township has two representatives: Yellowhill (Rep. Alan "B." Ensley, Rep. David Wolfe), Big Cove (Rep. Perry Shell, Rep. Teresa McCoy), Birdtown (Rep. Jim Owle, Rep. Gene "Tunney" Crowe, Jr.), Wolftown (Rep. Mike Parker, Rep. Dennis Edward "Bill" Taylor), and Painttown (Rep. Tommye Saunooke, Rep. Terri Henry) with Snowbird and Cherokee County communities considered as one township (Rep. Diamond Brown Jr., Rep. Adam Wachacha). Section 23 of the EBCI Charter states that, "The Tribal Council is hereby fully authorized and empowered to adopt laws and regulations for the general government of the Tribe, government the management of real and personal property held by the Tribe, and direct and assign among its members thereof, homes in the Qualla Boundary and other land held by them as a Tribe, and is hereby vested with full power to enforce obedience to such laws and regulations as may be enacted."

Council members also serve on various committees as part of their duties ranging from business (approving business licenses, etc.) to health to land resources (McCoy 2012).

The Office of Planning and Development is a division of the EBCI government that manages economic development efforts, administers grants, building rental, business development, and geographic information systems (GIS). Jason Lambert, a recipient of the 2011 Native American “40 Under 40” list by the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development (NCAIED) as an EBCI citizen, became the EBCI Planning and Economic Development Director in 2010. The offices I mentioned previously (Cherokee Business Development Office, Office of Budget & Finance's Revenue Office, the Office of Planning and Development, the Economic Development Office) work under this division of the EBCI government. The Sequoyah Fund Office, the Cherokee Chamber of Commerce, and the Cherokee Preservation Foundation are independent, governmentally-affiliated entities. Primarily, I worked with the Sequoyah Fund (SF) and Cherokee Business Development (CBD) offices because they hosted the most classes and outreach efforts to small businesses and potential small business owners. Here, I met with Russ Seagle (SF Sr. Loan Officer & Manager of Client Development), Nell Leatherwood (Executive Director, SF), and Hope Husky (CBD Business Development Specialist, EBCI citizen) regularly as classes were put together and events were organized. The other administrators and staff in these offices (all EBCI citizens—Gloria Rattler, CBD Director; Jacob Reed, CBD Business Development Specialist; Sherrene Swayney, SF Portfolio & Finance Manager, Kimberly Winchester, CBD Business Development & Resource Coordinator; and Lynn Blankenship, CBD Office Assistant) graciously answered my questions and emails as I learned about business on the Qualla Boundary (Sequoyah Fund 2011).

Together, these offices were in place to offer aid to the business (and potential businesses) on and surrounding the Qualla Boundary. These aids generally fall into four categories: taxes, financial support, structural support (literally, the dilemma of physical spaces), and training. It is only because of their inherent sovereignty that the EBCI can offer this combination of services to encourage the growth of their small business market³¹. And, as we can tell by Teresa's back room sign, this is something small businesses can surely benefit from.

Tax Laws

There are many reasons for an EBCI citizen to choose to locate their business on the reservation. One pragmatic reason is tax considerations. Since the EBCI is a federally recognized Native Nation, it is not under the jurisdiction of state laws—specifically, in this case, state tax laws. To those who are unfamiliar with the status of Native Nations and see them, incorrectly, as a county within a state, this may seem strange or even unfair—but with the clarification that federally-recognized Native Nations have a legal status above that of a state, comes understanding. For example, as a resident of North Carolina, I do not pay Virginia's taxes—I pay North Carolina's taxes (this being akin to the taxes that the EBCI levies) and federal taxes (which American Indians, like all U.S. citizens, pay). And if North Carolina were to open a casino on the border of Virginia, they do not need to ask Virginia's permission to do so, although they may enter into good faith negotiations since having a casino on the border would impact Virginia. Similarly, but even more clearly due to their

³¹ It is also interesting to note that the expectations of what a Native Nation government duty is goes beyond the expectations of the typical American governmental system. As Valerie Lambert states, their duties “include not simply governing and improving the welfare of their people, but also developing and managing their nations’ resources for the benefit of their citizens.” For the EBCI this includes land and monetary (investment of) resources (Lambert 2007, 104, 131).

legal status that is *higher* than a state's status, Native Nation citizens pay tribal and federal taxes and Native Nations are not legally required to negotiate with states (unless seeking Class III gaming)³², but may do so to maintain good relations (Deloria 1998b, 205; Bureau of Indian Affairs 2012)³³.

Therefore, if you are a citizen resident whose business is located within the Qualla Boundary, you are not subject to state *corporate* taxes (in NC, this is 6.9% corporate tax). In order to encourage citizen business owners, the EBCI also chooses to not levy a specific corporate tax for citizen business owners on the Qualla Boundary. They can also offer exemptions for some non-citizen businesses, but those are not yet formalized in any code. Since state *sales* taxes also do not apply, the EBCI can levy their own sales taxes, which they do at a rate of 7%³⁴ (compared to 7.75% for the state of NC)³⁵ (Office of the Treasury 2011). Furthermore, the EBCI can then offer sales tax incentives to businesses and citizen-owned businesses located on the Qualla Boundary. In this regard, they do not collect sales tax on artists/crafters, food vendors at Fall Festival, string bands, and chiefing³⁶, for example.

³² The Indian Gaming Regulatory Act requires specifies that Native Nations are allowed to have any gaming already allowed by the state and only need to form compacts with the state when pursuing Class III gaming. The requirement forcing Native Nations to negotiate with the state is a violation of the Native Nation's inherent sovereignty as having an authority above the state, but stands nonetheless.

³³ See also *Native American Church of North America v. Navajo Tribal Council* 272 F. 2nd. 131 (1959); *Inyo County v. Paiute-Shoshone Indians* (U.S. 2003), *Maynard v. Narragansett Indian Tribe*, 798 F. Supp. 94 (1992), *American Indian Agricultural Credit Consortium, Inc. v. Fredericks*, 551 F. Supp. 1020 (1982) *Wisconsin Potowatomies of Hannahville Indian Community v. Houston*, 393 F. Supp. 719.

³⁴ This increased to 7.5% in October 2011 in order to fund the Greenway, Aquoni Expo Center, and Cherokee Historical Association.

³⁵ This sales tax first began in 1952 with the advent of the Cherokee Tribal Community Services program, which was funded by the new sales tax to pay for public services (Perdue 2005, 92, 112)

³⁶ Food vendors at the Fall Festival, the largest festival for the EBCI, are frequently families who are selling homemade foods, such as beanbread, and foods that they have harvested, such as wishi mushrooms. Chiefing is a term given to entertainers who dress in pow wow regalia and either play music, tell stories, and/or perform pow wow dances, and have their picture taken with the tourists for a fee. They generally stand in covered areas

Financial and Structural Help

My neighbor said, “Why don’t you go buy you a new car?” I said, “Do they take t-shirts for payment? That’s where all my money’s at.” [Ron, Talking Leaves bookstore, EBCI citizen]

I sold three bean bread grease pitchers this week. We don’t have anymore. We couldn’t order no more. Not yet. We’ve got to get some money. We’ve got to earn the money. We just ordered glaze. We just ordered this. We just ordered that but, oh gosh, you’ve got to have it to make it. [Zena, Cherokee By Design, EBCI citizen]

It should come as no surprise, especially given the Great Recession timing of this research, that finances and money were the greatest cause of concern and uncertainty for the business owners that I spoke with. Although many people in the U.S., especially small businesses, were suffering grave financial losses at this time, the position that businesses located on the Qualla Boundary, and indeed on all reservation trust lands, were in faced some singular problems. Arguably, the biggest of these issues continued to be collateral.

Investment and Collateral

It may seem odd that I have chosen to combine financial help with structural help in this discussion of tribal support, but for American Indians the problem of land and of finances is uniquely intertwined. As such, overlapping with the issues of land ownership and citizenry is the complicated problem of start-up monies and investment capital for business loans. Native Nation and American Indian land is, as explained earlier, generally held in trust by the U.S. government. The unfortunate consequence of this is that this land cannot be used as an asset, i.e., collateral, for loans because the land, legally, cannot be taken out of trust for this purpose should the loan default. This means that start-up monies are very difficult to raise for individual citizens or Native Nations as a whole even in the best of economies. To

(ranging from teepees to tents) outside of the shops lining the main tourist drags and are extremely popular with the tourists who come to Cherokee.

combat this, the EBCI has a series of loans available to its citizens through its economic development programs ranging from micro-loans to \$250,000 (Sequoyah Fund 2011) for businesses ranging from start-ups to established businesses that are expanding (see Appendix B). Although collateral may not be required, these loans often have required training programs that the recipient has to graduate from. One such program is the Indianpreneurship course that I will discuss below. The EBCI also can take items such as vehicles, personal property, and/or per capita distributions pledges as collateral for smaller loans. For larger loans, they can take tribal land (possessory holdings) as collateral through an agreement with the BIA. In this case, in the event of default on the loan, they will work with the BIA to recover that land, which would then be held by them until a qualified buyer is located. This is obviously a more complicated scenario, but it has been done. As Russ Seagle of the Sequoyah Fund conveyed to me, “It’s a little trickier and takes longer than if we were able to acquire a deed of trust, but it can be done” (Seagle 2011).

The funding that the EBCI provides for businesses can sometimes be tightly focused, as in the case of the Healthy Foods Venture which provides lending to local businesses focused on meeting the demand of consumers looking for fresh, healthy, locally-produced foods as well as a New Economy Fund that provides capital for green, knowledge-based, or creative economy businesses (Cherokee Preservation Foundation 2011). But this support system also includes non-lending resources like a place (at the Cherokee Business Development Center) for EBCI citizens to receive information on credit scores, receive credit counseling, and budgeting counseling (Cherokee Preservation Foundation 2011). In addition, these business centers, the Sequoyah Fund in this instance, also host events such as the business plan competition that involves students from Western Carolina University,

Southwestern Community College, Tri-Counties Community College and Haywood Community College (Cherokee Preservation Foundation 2011). As can be seen from events such as these, the EBCI programs for business support do not always end at the Qualla Boundary. Many of their programs follow a good neighbor policy and extend throughout the seven far western counties of North Carolina (Cherokee Preservation Foundation 2011).

TERO

TERO, the Tribal Employment Rights Ordinance, is a nationally utilized program that is complicated and sometimes controversial despite its simple mission: to give preferential hiring to American Indians by Native Nations. TERO Ordinances, “require that all employers who are engaged in operating a business on reservations give preference to qualified Indians in all aspects of employment, contracting, and other business activities. TERO Offices were established and empowered to monitor and enforce the requirements of the tribal employment rights ordinance” (Nelson 2009). Once again, this is not a racial preference in hiring; this is a preference based on a citizenship in a nation and is, therefore, allowable under federal law (see, for example, *Morton v. Mancari* - 417 U.S. 535 (1974)). TERO is a general guideline that is meant to be customized and administered by each individual Native Nation. There are no standard rules across the board for all Native Nations. For the EBCI, the Tribal Employment Rights Commission (all EBCI council members and citizens) appoints the TERO to enforce the TERO laws.

At its most basic, the EBCI Indian Preference ordinances of TERO give EBCI citizen-owned businesses a preference over non-EBCI-owned businesses when applying for EBCI governmental contracts. For the EBCI for example, these businesses have a 5% leeway when submitting bids. If their bid is within 5% of an outside contractor, they are viewed as

the same and given a “second chance” at bidding. Amongst businesses, experiences with TERO have been decidedly mixed. EBCI citizen Bruce Martin (Long House Funeral Home) said he believed that, “It's a really good thing because it's a local thing. So far as I know, they really have been hiring local contractors, which they've never had before. There was always outside companies getting it. They've got several companies that's doing big business now. . . . If that TERO didn't exist, they'd probably get someone like a big company from Asheville or something like that.”

But there are issues to work out in order to make TERO truly useful to all of the business genres they choose to represent. Some business owners were very much against TERO after seeing TERO's disadvantages harm their businesses. To begin, a TERO-certified businesses must: have a percentage of their employees as citizens of the tribe, must adhere to the Davis-Bacon Act for wages (Wage and Hour Division 2002), and must be insured and bonded. The catch here is that the competing non-citizen businesses do not have to abide by these terms. This means they can offer lower bids because they do not need to have permanent staff or equivalent insurance. For larger contracts, such as construction, these costs may not be a larger percentage of their profits, but for smaller businesses, like restaurants, a 5% cut can be their entire profit margin. Teresa from Granny's related an experience she's had when placing bids,

Anyway, we have to jump through all those hoops. We have to do all the reports. We have to do all this stuff. We go to mandatory meetings but then when it comes time for the Tribe - for example, the trout derby, picnics, Christmas - we lost those to a guy from Bryson City. He runs a slaughterhouse but he's built this little thing off to the side to cater and so he doesn't keep a full staff. He only pulls kids [in for temporary work]. So I'm keeping Indian families working. I'm supporting them and I figured up in the last 25 years, we've generated about \$2 million worth of levee for the tribe but for that dollar that they saved [accepting the Bryson City businesses bid], they took I don't know how many away from the people here and I guarantee you that that man will not spend a dime on the reservation. . . . He's not Indian at all. Nobody else

[working with him] is. He's not on TERO. He's not on TERO and that's what gets me. [I don't mind losing a bid to another business on TERO], but he doesn't have to do anything. He doesn't have to pay to be considered. He doesn't have to file out all the reports. They don't have to have his tax returns. They don't have to have his proof of insurance. They don't have to have anything from him but we're the ones that have to do all this then because of that little 5% thing, we lose the bid. . . I'm not going to ask myself or my kids or my work family to work for nothing. It's not why we're in business. He only calls people in when he needs them. He doesn't have to keep them working all the time like I do.

I guarantee you he don't pay any levee to the tribe. He doesn't generate a dime of levee because any of the things that he comes on here to do, you can't tax the tribe. They're the taxing entity itself. There's nothing generated there for Eastern Members and it just drives me nuts. It does.

I'm on my soapbox all the time about that one and the same thing's happening with a lot of these bigger companies down here at the casino that are taking jobs away from the local people because they've got such deep pockets [they can afford to take the 5% hit]. . . I don't think it's fair to ask these little companies that just have four and five people working for them to compete against these big conglomerates.

TERO is also plagued with bureaucratic red tape that is confusing and, since each Native Nation creates its own system, non-standard. For Joel Queen to work within this system he has to apply to the business committee for a license (for a fee), then register for TERO in three different categories (for three more fees), and, finally, apply for get another license to be a vendor for the casino (for yet another fee). The separate categories for each TERO are especially complicated when these categories overlap (e.g., the dividing line between artistic stone work and stone carvings). Additionally, he states that, "My company's the one that carries the insurance and everything else that keeps protecting them from everything else but they don't want to do that. Any registered crafter can bid on those jobs, which he pays \$20-\$50 a year for and I'm paying \$150 for each part of my corporation that I'm registered for." Teresa had a not uncommon experience with TERO regarding recertification: "We just had to get recertified. . . I let my certification lapse just because I thought it said the 15th and it said the 5th and it was a mistake. Never been late before. Wouldn't cut me any slack. . . I had to redo my business plan. I had to redo the safety plan. I had to get more letters of

recommendation.” This also meant that Granny’s had to pay the full initial, “one time” registration fee again, in addition to the yearly fees. The lack of accountability for the TERO committee has also been a sticking point with some companies—when they have a complaint about TERO, who do they take that complaint to? At the current time, there is no system hierarchy in place to address grievances. At least one business has contemplated filing a lawsuit as a last resort. In the end, it is up to each Native Nation to create their own guidelines that will create the most benefits from TERO.

Buildings

Another way in which the EBCI is encouraging small business growth is by developing a small business incubator. Incubators are generally physical buildings in which start-up businesses can have office space and access to equipment that is shared communally. The purpose of an incubator is to lower the start-up costs of a business and provide a working area that businesses can launch from. This is done in the hopes that by lowering their start-up costs, they will be able to move to a permanent location sooner than they would if they had to wait to acquire the funds to afford their own permanent location. For the Qualla Boundary in particular, this has the additional benefit of giving the businesses time to wait for leases to become available on the Boundary. This incubator system is in progress at the time of writing. Another building that opened in May 2011 is the Tribal Cannery. The cannery provides a shared industrial kitchen space to EBCI citizens where they can produce value-added food items (jams, preserves, etc.) for sale or personal use. The large kitchen space and access to industrial canning equipment, however, is much more useful in a sales context for a larger scale of production than home use (Calhoun 2011).

The Per Cap

One financial element particular to the EBCI and several other Native Nations is the “per cap” payments (payments received bi-yearly by EBCI citizens for their tribal investment in the casino, short for “per capita”). To the larger non-Native society, the mistaken assumptions about per caps are that (1) these are hand-outs rather than payments on a very real monetary investment made to an enterprise and (2) the EBCI Nation is one monolithic entity rather than a collaboration of agents (i.e., EBCI citizens) who all invested heavily into an enterprise and who are now receiving dividends for said investment. Therefore, with this in mind, the payments can be seen less as a “tribal service” and more as a tribal administration on behalf of the citizens. It is an important element to mention because receiving these payments makes a profound difference to the business owners both in terms of start-up capital and in managing yearly expenses. Although it is not enough to support any business entirely, it is enough to supplement and support a business during the off-season or during a year as difficult as 2009. I will discuss the impacts of per caps and the casino further in Chapter Five.

Finally, the EBCI provides, from various funding sources, financial help for citizens to seek training. This can be in the form of a scholarship, such as the Bill Taylor Scholarship for students pursuing a degree in Business Administration or a business-related area (Beck 2011). It can also be used to fund specific training such as a recent program sponsored by the Sequoyah Fund in which 20 teachers from the Cherokee Central Schools (CCS) were funded to attend the North Carolina Rural Entrepreneurship through Action Learning (NC REAL) Institute in order to learn how to incorporate entrepreneurship skill development into the CCS core class curriculum (Cherokee Preservation Foundation 2011). Sponsoring

competitions to encourage businesses to participate in continuing education courses is also popular, such as the "Getting Retail Right" program that followed-up its efforts with a \$5,000 competition for Greatest Improvements (Seagle 2009a)³⁷. These efforts, along with the training opportunities outlined below, have led Cherokee to be designated as a Certified Entrepreneurial Community by the Advantage West Economic Development Group³⁸. The Advantage West website states, "Entrepreneurs are welcomed here. . . .There are tax incentives, no state sales tax or property taxes, and excellent resources for starting or relocating a business. Qualla Boundary is a delightful, distinctive place to live and have a business" (McKie 2011d). In addition, small events like the one-day Business Opportunity Fair, providing educational sessions on starting a business, are also sponsored by these groups.

Training

I went to see him after I got out of college for a job. He said, "Go out there and sweep the pavement." I said, "I got a college education." He said, "I'll go show you how then." [Ron Blankenship]

How important is training and previous experience to a small business owner? Every one of the small business owners I spoke with had extensive training (formal and/or informal) before beginning their own business and would recommend training to someone considering starting their own. Many lamented gaps in their past or current knowledge that led to significant costs—including some who had lost entire businesses. The training fell into

³⁷ The first and second place winners of 2009 were Tribal Grounds followed by Cherokee By Design, both of which I will feature later (Sequoyah Fund 2009).

³⁸ The two-year, five step process to be certified includes: Assuring that the community is committed to the process; Assessing the community's current entrepreneurial landscape; Creating a comprehensive strategy for entrepreneurial growth; Marshaling the community's entrepreneurial resources; Identifying and nurturing the community's most promising entrepreneurial talents.

three general categories: formal (paid training: college, courses, training through work, etc.), informal (reading, indirect work training³⁹, etc.), and family⁴⁰.

Gaining work experience came easier to those who were from families who owned businesses, as will be discussed further in the Family Business section below. As Abe relayed to me, “When I was old enough to run a cash register, which is at least at the age of eight or nine, I was put in the gift shop.” This was not unusual for family businesses and he worked for his family until he left for college, returning to the Qualla Boundary later to continue to work for them until he started his own business. Ray of Granny’s had a similar experience as a youngster, without the benefit of a family business, when he began working in a popular local restaurant when he was 11 years old. In this case, he had to work an evening shift so the health inspector wouldn’t catch him. After that, he started working when he was 14 at the former Timber Restaurant working for 75 cents an hour, 100 hours a week. Eventually he earned his degree in Hotel/Motel Restaurant Management from AB Tech in Asheville, NC (Waycaster 2009a), and worked his way up to be one of the top 10 food and beverage Directors worldwide while working at Holiday Inn before starting Granny’s Restaurant with his wife Teresa. As Ray’s case demonstrates, most small business owners have some combination of these types of training with prolonged exposure to insider knowledge being a primary factor influencing the sustainability of their current businesses.

³⁹ This would be working in an environment, but not receiving direct training—e.g., washing dishes in a restaurant, which does not provide direct managerial training, but, as an employee, provides indirect training on how to manage other employees.

⁴⁰ I put family into a separate category because it imparts more knowledge than indirect training since the family members are exposed to it continuously, rather than just 40 hours per week. But it is often less than formal training since they are not trained in many aspects of business ownership and /or are just expected to “pick up” how to work in different positions at the job site.

The most common training among business owners whose businesses had passed the five year mark was formal training. All four of the local colleges (Southwestern Community College, Western Carolina University, Tri-County Community College, and Haywood Community College) currently offer some type of small business classes ranging from accounting to business management for artists and some have entire small business centers. These classes were popular with the owners who were already going to college as teenagers, although, interestingly, many went to college for majors other than business ownership (ranging from hospital administration to art education). Additionally in direct training, most business owners had either previously managed a business or had taken formal courses other than college that they pointed to as helping them manage their business. The elementary and high school programs that I mentioned previously also demonstrate the EBCI's attempts to bolster this type of training for its citizens at an early age.

From there, most owners used informal training to keep their business viable: entrepreneurship magazines, books (such as the popular *E-Myth* series), and information exchange sessions, such as those sponsored by the Cherokee Chamber of Commerce. The current business owners, when asked about other businesses (or their previous businesses) that they had seen fail, cited the (1) lack of basic business finance management information and (2) lack of information on time management as the biggest obstacles. As Ron stated, "And that's another thing about business, I see people [who] . . . want to go into business. They go into business, then they say, 'Oh, it takes this much time?' They don't know how much is involved. So they really need to educate themselves. So they quit." Calculating your total costs—including your own salary, the need for employees or not, and the rights as a

leasee—are just a handful of topics that can sink a business before it even opens its doors solely due to a lack of awareness.

But what can a person who does not come from a business family and does not have the means, or personality, for a college education do when they want to open a business? And how do Native Nations increase the amount of businesses that are viable over the long-term? Both of these issues are being tackled by the new entrepreneurial and small business programs offered by the EBCI. The main center for business assistance on the Qualla Boundary is the Cherokee Business Development Center & Sequoyah Fund. Although billed as separate entities (see Appendix A), the two departments overlap in many activities and are even located in the same office space.

The Indianpreneurship Program

One of the programs that I participated in while I was in Cherokee was the Indianpreneurship course offered by the Sequoyah Fund (“Indianpreneurship: A Native American Journey Into Business” (ONABEN: A Native American Business Network 2005)). According to their flyers, Indianpreneurship, “is a business start-up course that teaches all the basics of starting and operating a successful small business. The course meets once a week for nine weeks and is a prerequisite for obtaining a loan from The Sequoyah Fund” (Sequoyah Fund 2011). At the time that I took the course, the fall of 2009, it was also being considered as a prerequisite for obtaining TERO certification (and has since been implemented as such). The class started by covering the creation of mission statements, community analysis, marketing, and advertising. It then progressed to more detailed topics, such as TERO certification, cash flow projections, bookkeeping (pricing and sales forecasting), and operations. This was followed by larger issues such as loans, legal

considerations, insurance needs, and taxes. Finally, it wrapped up with business plan presentations by the students. Speakers from various departments (for example, TERO) were also brought in to answer questions and give more detailed explanations of their services and requirements.

Coming from the perspective of a current business owner and as a researcher who studies small businesses, I found that the course provided a solid foundation for addressing the realities of starting a business and trying to sustain it through the difficulties of its first few years. The on-the-ground version of the course was a bit different from the originally described Indianpreneurship course. This was due to the addition, by the course leader, Russ Seagle (non-EBCI citizen), of some elements from the NC REAL (North Carolina Rural Entrepreneurship through Action Learning) training program. In general, this mix utilized the Indianpreneurship training folder for readings and some homework, while the REAL handouts were used for in-class assignments. They augmented each other in a cohesive, understandable way.

Let's talk about this "Indianpreneurship" as a concept, though. I generally find that products marketed towards Indians as a "pan-" whole tend to walk a fine line. For some products, such as the Nike Native Air N7, the first shoe made specifically for "a race or ethnicity," (The Associated Press 2007) geared toward those American Indians with diabetes, the target is really the diabetes with some fairly subtle imagery (sunset, feather, etc.) tacked on to signal that it is intended for American Indians. Although the concept of a sunset as being something that is "racially" specific is a bit strange, if a product appeals to its target customer in the way it is intended, the product is successful (whether this particular product was successful is another discussion). But what about Indianpreneurship? And how does this

address the topic of economic identity construction for American Indians? I was curious how a business training program would address the needs of American Indians as a population, that is, across Native Nations. Would it talk about the legal issues American Indians face on reservations? Would it discuss the issues of familial obligation problems that are circulated as obstacles for American Indian business ownership (Pickering 2004:29)? Would it discuss the economic problems that face American Indians specifically? Would it give examples of successful American Indian business people and how they sustained their businesses? These are all issues that American Indians across the United States face. Addressing them in a non-tribally-specific manner would not be an unusual method for a basic, introductory course about starting a business.

I need to acknowledge here, before I delve into description, two pieces of information: (1) that the content of this program was incredibly accurate, useful, and accessible and that I would be comfortable recommending it to anyone thinking about starting a business and (2) that this program was put together *by* American Indians *for* American Indians. Knowing this second point, I was therefore a bit surprised when I was handed the substantial folder (about 3 inches thick) on the first night of the class and found the cover and inside foldout flow chart of the chapters and steps covered in petroglyphs. Although these are, indeed, of American Indian origin, it seemed a strange choice to use 10,000-year-old prehistoric symbols to represent 21st century American Indian businesses. The pictures that marked the beginning of each chapter also appeared to be typical representations of European construction of “The American Indian” (Smith 2009): the canoe maker kneeling by his work-in-progress in a forest, the elder storyteller whose hair is in wrapped braids and who is standing in front of a rock wall with

carvings, horses in a field, a lonely road trailing off into a pine forest, an older woman (with two younger girls behind) tending to the drying of salmon by a fire, teepees on a lush lawn, a sunset (maybe this sunset is an American Indian theme after all?), shoeprints in the sand under two Indian-head nickels and two antlers, a mountainside that appears to be the face of an Indian man, a large landscape with a lone fly-fisherman casting into a larger river, a fisherman business owner in a guide boat that sports a feather logo, and, finally, a modern picture of three program graduates and a leader standing in front of a heavily-used whiteboard.

These pictures elicited a range of questions and emotions for me. On one hand, these images are exactly what you would expect to appear on a product labeled “American Indian.” They are mainly throwbacks to stereotypical images of what has been deemed “The American Indian”: making a canoe, telling stories, drying fish, owning horses, teepees, etc. I was dismayed at the lack of any non-traditional, modern, current American Indian businesspeople. Where was the software programmer, the skateboard designer, or the gas station owner? I am not claiming that the more commonly found images of American Indians should all be replaced⁴¹, but the lack of balance between the portrayals of business opportunities was disappointing.

On the other hand, some of the images were more interesting than they first appeared. The image of the teepee, for example—so terribly stereotypical—was turned on its head when you looked closer. These teepees were obviously made, not for American Indians, but for tourists who wanted to go camping and have that experience in a teepee. The lawn

⁴¹ Building a canoe is, of course, as legitimate and modern of an enterprise as programming and eliminating references just because they portray what someone deems to be an image that is “too American Indian” is just as an egregious of an error as having no contemporary business imagery.

surrounding them is meticulously manicured, there is a concrete entrance with a number in front of each one (it appears to be concrete on the inside floor), and each is a different primary color. Judging by the pine trees surrounding the area (and that this folder was published in Oregon), I can safely assume that these are not on the plains, the original location for American Indians that used this teepee design. I was amused by imagining the owner of the campsite who saw this need for tourists who wanted to experience life as an American Indian (albeit many years ago) and filled this niche. Despite being far away from where teepees would have been found, this person knew that most non-Native Americans know little to nothing about how American Indians lived. Even when I was in elementary school I had the common experience of “American Indian” day being the one day where a teepee was built on our playground. But this owner is fully aware that the teepee is an icon non-Native Americans associate with American Indians, so that is naturally what you would build in order to attract them to campgrounds. I do not think it would be misplaced to assume that this campground does well, considering there is still a strong nostalgia market for American Indian products across the United States (as we will see later in the tourist section of Chapter Seven).

During this course we read four of the ten Indianpreneurship chapters and then sections of four other chapters. But here’s the thing about owning a business: there are basic principles that apply no matter where you are, who you are, or what you do: accounting, inventory/supplies, advertising, planning, etc. So how does Indianpreneurship make these dry, generic concepts relevant for American Indians? Imagery is one way, but the content of what we covered in class contained little to no references to anything specifically American Indian. Some sections contained examples describing a business situation that was located on

a reservation, but otherwise, any references had been avoided. I decided to look through the entire book and beyond the course requirements to get a fuller picture of who this Indianpreneur was.

The content was, reasonably, mainly generic business start-up information. The examples of businesses were always of American Indians (one presumes, since they did not want to specifically name tribal affiliations and therefore make the examples less identifiable to the reader) with businesses ranging from basket-making, beading (9/11 imagery, specifically), an Authentic Indian café, to handyman work and an eyeglass retailer. The names of the businesses were both American Indian oriented, such as “GreyBears Engineering”, and generic (“Smith’s Automotive”)—a much wider spectrum of businesses than their images would have suggested. The text contained references to casinos and had phrases like, “Good scouting makes good hunting.” Missing, however, was any reference to specifically American Indian situations. American Indians have unique circumstances when it comes to opening a business that go beyond the general principles of business ownership. A prime example of this is location. An American Indian business owner needs to decide whether to locate on or off the reservation. To decide this you have know about certain aspects like tax ramifications, leasing pricing and availability, and inventory delivery. You have to know the laws (e.g., if you want to own a restaurant that serves wine, you need to located on a non-dry county). And you really need to be aware of the services that are available to American Indians: loans through your Native Nation, loans through the U.S.

government⁴², training, citizenship issues (can you pass-on your business?), and professional organizations.

Although these broader ideas (e.g., “loans”) were discussed in the folder, there was no mention of how these aspects can specifically help or hinder an American Indian. Luckily for our class, outside of the Indianpreneurship course, Russ brought in Curtis Wildcat from the TERO office to speak, which answered at least one set of American Indian ownership questions. As I found in my interviews, sometimes, as an American Indian business owner, just knowing that the help is out there for you, if you need it, makes all the difference in the world. Obviously, these are not circumstances that every American Indian finds themselves in (e.g., the choice of whether to locate on a reservation or not), but given that this coursebook is specifically developed for American Indians, it was disappointing to see none of these issues were directly addressed.

Other Sequoyah Fund and Cherokee Business Training

Indianpreneurship is the longest training program that the EBCI offers, but it is far from the only one. While I was there they offered five sections of training classes spaced throughout the year: Start It (Important business planning basics before starting a new business), Grow It (Business policies and practices for the business owner), Tech It (Learn the technology skills to grow and improve your business), Improve It (Build employer & employee skills to improve customer satisfaction, safety, productivity and employee happiness), and Green It (How to get involved in the green business movement; Sequoyah

⁴² The U.S. Small Business Administration has a department dedicated specifically to American Indian businesses: “Office of Native Affairs is committed to help Native American entrepreneurs have full access to the necessary business development and expansion tools available through the Agency’s entrepreneurial development, lending and procurement programs.” (as written to the One Feather by Lynn L. Douthett, SBA North Carolina District Director Nov. 10th, 2010.)

Fund 2011). These classes cover a range of topics as general as how to use Quicken to EBCI-specific classes on employee training in Cherokee culture and history (primarily for businesses that are tourist-oriented).

Beyond Sequoyah Fund Training

The Sequoyah Fund and Cherokee Business Development offices are not the only avenues of training. Qualla-T is a free program run by the Cherokee Chamber of Commerce that offers employee training that “integrates Cherokee and mountain values and attitudes into your workplace as a basis for providing excellent customer service⁴³.” Teresa from Granny’s participated in this program, which can be a full half day. She served breakfast to all of her employees (with a nearly 100% participation rate) and declared the program “phenomenal” (Williamson and Williamson 2010). For artists, there are even classes offered by OICA (the Oconaluftee Institute for Cultural Arts, a joint program with Southwestern Community College) on artist business issues, such as “Copyright & Laws for Artist” (Oconaluftee Institute for Cultural Arts 2010) and Certification in the Building Industry for Cherokee Craft Artists (Moore 2011).

With all of this training available, what was the actual usage by business owners? Did they find these helpful or even appealing? In general, I found that businesses that utilized the training programs did so extensively. It is interesting to note that the two top businesses, in terms of local popularity and daily use, that I interviewed and that utilized these programs did not have a strong family background in business ownership—yet these were two of the most successful businesses at that time (i.e., Granny’s and Tribal Grounds). Those businesses I interviewed who stated that they had not taken any courses usually did not do so because (1)

⁴³ As described in their PowerPoint summary, these include: Dedication & Loyalty, Group Harmony, Humility, Perseverance & Courage, Reciprocity & Balance, Respect & Trust.

they were not aware of them, (2) did not have the time, and/or (3) were reluctant to ask for help. In this last case, the owners' responses varied from Ron who said that he wanted the sense of accomplishment in succeeding on his own terms to Abe who was reluctant to admit that the knowledge he had gained from his family was not enough to help carry his businesses and that they were not doing well as a result. Coming from my own business perspective, the most difficult hurdle to broadening your training and keeping business skills up-to-date is the time factor. This is especially true if you do not yet have employees or only have one or two that watch the store so you can run out for inventory replenishment. Running a business is an intense exercise in time (or lack thereof) management and it can be overwhelming when your business is not doing well, which is the exact time you need these services. Some of the programs (such as "Getting Retail Right") addressed this issue by offering to do an in-house consult for individual businesses. These were only offered occasionally, though, and only to a few select businesses. Smaller classes were also set up to help with the time crunch as "Lunch & Learns." Each lunch, these cover smaller topics such as using social media like Facebook, Twitter, or blogging. As these were just being rolled-out after I left, I will need to follow-up to see what their enrollment rate has been during the past year.

Finally, while not training per se, the EBCI also hosts expos and networking opportunities. While I lived there, this was mainly in the form of Chamber of Commerce meetings, but two years after I left there was a collaborative effort by the Sequoyah Fund, Cherokee Business Development Center and the North Carolina Indian Economic Development Initiative (NCIEDI) called The Business Expo Cherokee Business Summit & Expo held at the casino. Says Kimlyn Lambert, an EBCI tribal member serving on the

NCIEDI board, “We have had a lot of discussions about small business coming to Cherokee. . . and, the need for people to be entrepreneurs and come and do small businesses here such as dry cleaning, etc. that a lot of bigger towns have that we don’t have here” (McKie 2011b).

Business programs on reservations, like the ones that the EBCI offices are implementing, have been proven effective in increasing the standard of living for their residents. David Benson’s research studied the Lakota Fund, an SBA-like loan program on the Pine Ridge reservation that provides micro-loans, loans up to \$20,000, technical assistance, and a business incubator from 1987-2006. The results of their regression estimates suggest that the Lakota Fund has succeeded in raising real per capita income of Shannon county residents consistently and significantly” throughout the study period (Benson et al. 2009).

The Complications of Buying Local

When “Buy Local” Fails

As the Great Recession marched on, the Buy Local movement grew across the United States. American Express even began sponsoring Small Business Saturday (designated as the day after Black Friday, which is the day after Thanksgiving and one of the biggest shopping/consumerist days of the year) by crediting anyone who registered their card with \$25 if they spent \$25 or more at a local business that day. This offer would later be extended throughout the month of December and continues to occur each year thus far. In my various travels outside of Cherokee, small businesses had 8x11 signs (some grouped in elaborate displays), given to them either by the local Chamber of Commerce or through websites such as the Project 3/50, proudly reminding consumers of the benefits of shopping locally. At first

glance, you might expect the EBCI to support such an endeavor on behalf of their small businesses.

However, all of this rhetoric and the surrounding discourse is problematic at best for EBCI small businesses. Clearly these campaigns are important to them, but the reality is that many small businesses on the Qualla Boundary, especially Cherokee, are geared towards both locals and tourists—and many of those are concentrated, by physical necessity, together in tourist-centric locations. To flourish signs in your front window loudly proclaiming to “Buy Local!” would seem counter-productive at best (hypocritical at worst). In addition, the Buy Local movement is primarily useful in urban environments where options are available. In a rural area, “buying local” could well mean choosing to commute an hour to buy a toaster at a local store over driving fifteen minutes to the neighboring town’s Wal-mart. As a result, the EBCI and businesses on the Qualla Boundary are, for the most part, left out of this commercial discourse—and its benefits⁴⁴.

That said, it is important to note that working with and buying from within the community does have a strong meaning for the store owners on the Qualla Boundary. For Abe, who estimates that over 50% of his store is strictly EBCI sourced, it was about buying from local artists (often more expensive than the ones he could buy from out west) even if it meant going into debt, “because it also hurts when you can’t buy things and help a family.”⁴⁵ This was a sentiment that was repeated to me many times by store owners from Bethany⁴⁶ whose store is bursting at the seams with locally-made trinkets as well as expensive goods

⁴⁴ Some attempts have been since then to bring awareness to local offerings. One was the Handmade, Homemade, Homegrown market that will be at the Cherokee Indian Fairgrounds each Saturday from 9am – 3pm through the month of September (McKie 2011f).

⁴⁵ Abe also buys the crafts outright from artists, rather than having them on consignment, for the same reasons.

⁴⁶ Asked to remain anonymous.

(often buying from a family in need even when she has many of the same product), Ron, who says, “I always encourage or buy from the locals because I know they need it for income too” and to Teresa who hires mainly EBCI citizens (and often times the youngest and least experienced) and Joel who used his own materials to supply the new art school when they were getting on their feet. Russ, who now teaches many of the new EBCI citizen business owners through the Indianpreneurship class and others, sums it up by describing, “We’ve got some clients here and when you talk to them, what is their motivation? Their motivation is not all about making money. It’s about surviving and making enough, but it’s about creating jobs for Indians. It’s about creating jobs for the Cherokee. Keeping their people employed and growing their economy, this economy, and I admire that.”

The question is how to translate this attitude into a larger discourse that can garner more substantial benefits from not just locals, but from all of the consumers that come to the Qualla Boundary. One of the avenues I had been thinking about in this respect was derived from many of the newest efforts that used the phrase “small” instead of “local.” One example is the Project 3/50 “Big Things Come from Small Boxes” campaign that ran during the holidays in 2010. Could this be the key to the EBCI being included in this discourse? This would eliminate the issue of having customers comprised of both locals and tourists. Surprisingly, neither the Chamber of Commerce⁴⁷ nor the business aid departments (Sequoyah, etc.) had engaged in this effort while I was there. This could have been due to the implicit emphasis on “local” or their unique situation of few options existing in Cherokee *except* for local options. I do believe that pushing a “buy from small” effort would increase

⁴⁷ Although the Chamber of Commerce seems like a good organization to host this kind of advertisement, the Chamber of Commerce has to serve all businesses—this includes franchises, chains, large stores as well as small businesses. Therefore, it may be seen as working against other members of the Chamber if it does promote this movement.

spending of both tourist dollars and local dollars. Furthermore, it may encourage small businesses that serve the Qualla Boundary by showing that they are indeed supported and also reduce the dependence on outside chains. With encouragement, more small businesses might even open.

These ideas would be partially realized nearly a year after I had left. In November 2010, I read in the One Feather about the participation of Cherokee Business Development Center and the Sequoyah Fund in the new Small Business Saturday:

Support Small Business Saturday: Ensuring that we have a vibrant economy—one that creates good-paying jobs for our families and brings prosperity to our cities and towns across the country—is a responsibility we all share. I’m proud to announce that Cherokee is joining a nationwide movement to help revive one of the most important engines of our economy, independently-owned small businesses. We are teaming up with dozens of partners to launch the first-ever Small Business Saturday. Department stores and large retailers have Black Friday. Online retailers have Cyber Monday. And now, starting on Nov. 27 of this year, small business owners will have Small Business Saturday. We envision Small Business Saturday as a day when everyone, across the country, comes together to show their support for the independently-owned, local merchants they love in their own hometowns. Over time, we hope that Small Business Saturday will be known as the day when everyone makes a special effort to “shop small.” Small businesses were among the hardest hit sectors during the recession, and they need our support to get back on their feet. The stakes are high. Over the past two decades, small businesses have created more than 65 percent of the new jobs in this country. For every \$100 spent in locally-owned, independent stores, \$68 returns to the community through taxes, payroll and other expenditures. When small businesses succeed we all benefit. More than anything else, owners of these businesses say they need more people coming into their shops and buying their goods and services. To drive foot traffic, we are supporting a major social media and advertising campaign that we hope will put Small Business Saturday on the map. . . . We’re working with some terrific partners, including American Express Company, Facebook, the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Main Streets Center, and the National Association of Women’s Business Owners, to make the upcoming holiday season a success for small business owners across America. Shining a light on the local businesses that contribute so much to our communities is something we can all get behind. Please join the movement and spread the word to make the first Small Business Saturday a success. Submitted by, Cherokee Business Development Ctr. and The Sequoyah Fund. [Cherokee Business Development Center & Sequoyah Fund 2009]

CHAPTER 4

AMERICAN INDIAN BUSINESSES AND PRACTICES

The Landscape of Businesses Varieties on the Qualla Boundary

The Travel Channel's *Bizarre Foods* Andrew Zimmern on tribal member's Johnnie Sue Myers cooking featured in cookbook and TV:

These are the dying breed stories that we try to capture whenever we are on the road with our cameras. [Arneach 2011]

As I sat down in the crowded little diner located in the midst of the Great Smokey Mountains, the waitress asked me, “’Si-yo, a-di-ta-s-di do-i-yu-sdi?” (“Hi, what would you like to drink?”). I read the menu, partially printed in the Cherokee syllabary (an as-of-yet uncommon, but growing practice), and answered, “’Si-yo, ko-wi a-gwa-du-li-ha” (“Hi, I’d like a coffee.”) I knew from the language immersion course I had taken that summer, well before I started my fieldwork, that this was one of a handful of restaurants⁴⁸ that you could go to on the Qualla Boundary where, if the wait staff recognized you, you could speak Cherokee. This is where the spark of my research questions formed as I began thinking about how a community is shaped by its small businesses and entrepreneurs in a dynamic and recursive socioeconomic process. It also reinforced the absurdity of the non-Native world’s continued perception of American Indians as a “dying breed” even as American Indians are writing cookbooks about “Cherokee feasts,” speaking the Cherokee language, and running

⁴⁸ My first introduction to this was while taking Bo Taylor’s language immersion course. Every day we would eat lunch at a different restaurant and some, like the Little Princess, had staff that already spoke Cherokee. Others, such as the local Chinese buffet, spoke remedial Cherokee as a result of Bo’s persistent attempts at teaching the staff Cherokee each time he went in.

small businesses that support both these endeavors. Even when people, such as Andrew Zimmern above, are surrounded by Cherokee people all day we are still viewed as vanishing.

Which forms of businesses have been or are now the most successful businesses (tourist oriented, community oriented, or a combination)? How does their sustainability inform the identity of these businesses? For example, are there long-standing businesses, which may indicate family-based businesses, or short-term businesses which point to a more entrepreneurial economic identity? Do we see the proposed economic benefits of small businesses, such as talent retention and diversification, realized on the Qualla Boundary over time? Is the historical success of applicable businesses attributable to a combination of conditions only found on the Qualla Boundary? For example, do we see long histories of only family businesses, is it the location, etc. Conversely, could the elements of a successful small business for the EBCI be translated to other communities?

As mentioned in my methodology section, my research into these questions builds upon the efforts of a number of anthropologists who foreground the individual in studies of society and social change (Geertz 1973; Malinowski 1984; Wolf 1982). Leach, for example, opines that, “every individual of a society, each in his own interest, endeavors to exploit the situation as he perceives it and in so doing the collectivity of individuals alters the structure of the society itself” (1964: 8). These social theorists have provided frameworks through which I investigate the ways that society is made and remade by individuals through the use of the space created by their private businesses. My thinking about the relationship between the individual and society has also been impacted by the ways other social scientists, such as Bourdieu (1977), have attempted to incorporate agency into their analyses (see also Eriksen 2005; Firth 2004; Holland et al. 2007; Sawin 1993; Schumpeter 1989).

While much of the literature on Native Nations addresses the co-called “system” and frames large-scale social and political institutions, like centralized tribal governments (especially in discussions of nation-building), as the agent(s) of change (Cornell 1999; Kurtz 2001; O'Brien 1989), some works focus on the individual's role in shaping society and social change, such as those that probe Native Nation community or cultural revitalization (Cattelino 2010; Jackson 2003) and those that describe shifts in social or cultural forms (Lambert 2007; Fowler 2002; Sturm 2002). In the literature on the American Indian political activist movement of the 1960s and 1970s termed “Red Power,” the importance of the individual's ability to bring about social change is highlighted (Josephy, Nagel, and Johnson 1999; Means and Wolf 1996). This literature emphasizes individuals who emerge as community leaders as opposed to discussing how a member of a society instigates change through his/her actions and choices. My research builds upon this literature by critically examining what impact can be made on society and on broader social historical trajectories by the daily actions of ordinary people, such as owners of small, local stores earning a living through retail sales. These questions and literature bring us to the heart of this chapter: the business owners themselves and, specifically, the types of businesses they choose to manage. To this end, one of the most long-standing business types the Qualla Boundary is the family-owned business.

And the impact of family on the Qualla Boundary cannot be overestimated. Nearly every business owner that I spoke with came from a family that had also owned a business. And every owner I spoke with, barring one non-EBCI citizen, had an extended family member that did. On one hand, this is surprising and may leave the impression that small business ownership is extraordinarily common for the citizens of the EBCI. However, the

reality is that due to leasing and possessory land holding laws, businesses usually stay within a family in one form or another (either as the intact business, the business's building, or as land). Therefore, many familial groups own and pass down these businesses, giving the impression that many individual EBCI citizens are business owners. One example of this is that two large and successful families own much of the tourist-based businesses that operate in Cherokee⁴⁹.

These two families, specifically brothers, started some of the most successful businesses (by financial and sustainability criteria) in Cherokee, and then had their children work, run, and manage them. At this time, one of these brother's family members own most of the buildings and businesses that line the major tourist thoroughfare in Cherokee (and many others scattered throughout the town), ranging from hotels to craft stores to restaurants⁵⁰. Many of this family's children started their own businesses. Growing up, working, and managing a small business prior to starting your own has a dramatic effect on the long-term survival of your own business. These children had access to financial and intellectual resources that most people do not. In addition, the issue of property ownership/leases is also directly related as these families had property leases spanning 25 years at a time (or more), thereby gaining access to the physical space to open businesses, a scarce resource the Qualla Boundary. The power of both cultural capital in the form of business knowledge and economic capital in the form of land leasing is very strong in business ownership.

⁴⁹ I have not given details, such as names, of these two families due to some sensitive and serious health issues that arose during and after my fieldwork as well as the accompanying identification that would occur by people associated with the family who wished to remain anonymous.

⁵⁰ I had two different encounters where, when looking for a specific person, I was told to go into any one of "those stores on 441" and ask where he was, as workers are sometimes transferred between the businesses.

What does this mean for non-family-business people who are interested in starting a business? First, it means that they may not have access to the same capital (see investment issues above). Second, they may not have access to the knowledge and expertise of owning a business. Third, they also may not have access to a physical space. Since the leases on the Qualla Boundary, which I will discuss further in Chapter Five, are expensive *and* tend to be decades long, a potential owner has to (1) have the leasing monies available and (2) wait for another businesses' lease to expire. Some families have possessory holding over some of their business land, which means that unless they lease it out it will not be available to anyone else. In light of these challenges, it is not surprising then that there are few business owners in Cherokee who do not come from business-owning families to some degree (this effect is also noted in other literature about American Indian reservation-based private business (Pickering 2004)).

Furthermore, this begs the question, for those without familial business experience, how does the success or failure of their fellow community members affect their motivation to start a business? On one hand, we might expect that seeing other community members succeed would inspire others to follow in their footsteps. On the other hand, though, these families that are entrenched may give the impression that they are crowding out anyone hoping to get in (a topic that becomes especially salient in discussions of the First Descendents issues in Chapter Five). This is especially clear when I looked at the tourist industry. While sitting in on a business start-up course, I learned that most of the potential business owners that I spoke with were not going into the tourist industry. I was told that they wanted to serve the EBCI community instead. But what components go into this particular motivation? I believe that the high visibility of the tourist industry, combined with what is

seen as a poor representation of identity (a sentiment echoed by Ron who said about his choice of goods, “And that’s why when I opened in ’95, I knew [what I wanted in my inventory]. I had seen all these junk stores all my life and I wished they’d go away. I knew what I wanted, that’s what I got.”), and an inability to compete with other tourist businesses which are so entrenched physically, monetarily, and commercially pushes potential owners away. They believe, and justifiably so, that they cannot compete with families that have been in an industry for generations. The issues of starting a tourist-based business on the Qualla Boundary are therefore complicated, to say the least.

Tourist enterprises are crucial to look at because they are by far the most visible businesses in Cherokee. The streets that are the largest—and that you would be diverted to if you did not know your way around Cherokee—are lined with tourist stores. However, if you know the back streets, you can bypass this onslaught of tourist paraphernalia and drive down streets that are, instead, lined with governmental agencies and, much further away, residential housing. This serves two purposes: (1) in a town whose income is primarily generated from tourists, you want them to be able to find stores quickly and easily and (2) the locals get a reprieve from the onslaught of tourist traffic and place the stores *they* need to access off the tourists path⁵¹ (Beard-Moose 2009). Unfortunately, this gives the impression that most of the businesses that exist on the Qualla Boundary, or that are owned by EBCI citizens, are aimed solely at tourists. This also gives the impression that these businesses are the most successful because they are not only the flashiest in terms of size and appearance, but they are also

⁵¹ When it looked as if a Wal-mart would open in Cherokee, one of the most common complaints that I heard was that it was being built on a side road that many locals use to bypass the heavy tourist traffic. This particular road was one of the few that would take you past the tourist’s main drag—and subsequent traffic jams. Having the Wal-mart there would essentially reveal the little-used path and pave the way for more tourists to foray onto the local’s space.

generally crowded. In reality, there are many successful businesses (including consulting firms and landscaping operations) that, while not in existence as long as the tourist businesses, are sustainable and doing well.

As I mentioned previously, less than half of the businesses, as reported by the Office of Budget & Finance's Revenue Office, are strictly tourist-oriented. There are many construction and landscaping businesses based on the Qualla Boundary and/or owned by citizens (some of which have won small business awards such as those given at the yearly National Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week Conference) as well as other miscellaneous businesses including: a funeral home, motorcycle chop shop, business consulting firm, mechanics, artist supply stores (wood, beads, leathers, etc.), guttering, accounting, barbershop/salon, guns & ammo, legal services, glass, website services, movie production services, travel services, pest control, day care, grocery, signs services, kennels, local grocery stores, painting services, DJing, etc.—with more starting all the time.

Space for Businesses

Although the physical space of these businesses varies, with some having their own office space or building while others are run from a vehicle (such as the “Sound of Music” DJ service, run out of a van that only uses biodiesel), many of these local businesses are run out of the owner’s home or from a building on their family’s land. Many of these would be quite challenging to find if you did not know the area well. In fact, for some homes with small farms, the practice of leaving produce or corn meal out in their front yard with the expectation that payment will be left in return is common. As I was told, you just know that they will have it, so you drive by and check to see if they have any ready for sale. More

coveted produce, such as the delicious and difficult-to-find wishi mushroom, require knowing how to contact the owner to get on the waiting list.

In these ways, some local business owners mitigate the issues of physical space and start-up capital, but for others who have visions of more complex businesses, such as restaurants, more comprehensive support is needed. One form that this takes is the relatively new Indianpreneurship course, introduced in the previous chapter, given by the Sequoyah Business office. This program, as mentioned, is designed to give foundational knowledge about business ownership: accounting issues, start-up capital options, business plans, etc. It serves two main purposes: (1) It prepares inexperienced potential business owners for the surprises that arise when starting and running a business and (2) it serves as a “weeder” as some students drop out when confronted with the minutiae and commitments of small business ownership that they have not adequately prepared for. Both of these processes strengthen the small businesses that start on the Qualla Boundary. Finally, as a testament to this course, the instructor, and the fortitude of small business ownership during a time of economic crisis, the year before I took this course (2008) the average number of students was six, The year I took this course (2009) it was 20⁵², and now (2011) they have 39 participants.

New and Potential Businesses

One reason that I sat in on this Indianpreneurship course was to see what the new crop of small business owners envisioned for the landscape of business on the Qualla Boundary. And when thinking about starting a business, I wondered if these students (including both EBCI citizens and non-citizens, with all students living on or near the Qualla Boundary and wanting to start their businesses locally) would gear their businesses towards

⁵² Unfortunately that year’s swine flu that caused the number of participants to drop precipitously to the eleven that eventually graduated.

tourists or locals. For one lesson, the instructor, Russ Seagle, collected our classes input on which businesses the Qualla Boundary had and which ones it lacked. It became obvious that what the students believed it lacked, for the most part, were businesses that served the locals: pharmacy, furniture, car dealership, bakery, hardware, etc.

Later that semester, in the final class of the program and after going through all of the planning and analyzing, everyone had to make a pitch for their business. Eight of the eleven businesses were not tourist-oriented. These were: the Braves Drive-In restaurant, the Kituwah Foundation for traditional medicinal knowledge, a party planner, a laundromat, two landscaping companies, a plumber, and a movie production studio. Of the remaining three, one was a 24-hour restaurant (a niche sorely unfilled throughout Western North Carolina), one was an art sales website⁵³, and the last was a bead artisan. From the casual discussions that occurred around the four tables that night, it appeared that most people were thinking of starting businesses that they wanted to use—as opposed to starting businesses strictly based on profit analysis or even to avoid tourist businesses. From my personal experience, this is a common path amongst small business owners just starting a first business. To “find a niche and fill it” is a common cliché told to potential businesses but, honestly, unless you know the market well you do not know where there is a niche to fill, let alone how to fill it. The first step is then to think to yourself, “What niches exist in my world?” For one Indianpreneurship student, this was a sports “bar.” Since the Qualla Boundary is a dry reservation—except in the casino—it could not truly be a bar, but the theme of the restaurant was the key idea for him. During the football season (and with other rival games) it is a given that when the game

⁵³ This is also debatable because the intent of this individual was to act as an intermediary between local, EBCI artists and customers who wanted to buy their work online. In essence, this is both a local service and a tourist enterprise.

was in neighboring Bryson City, you would get dinner at Naber's Drive-In in Bryson City. This is where both EBCI and Bryson City residents would gather and discuss the high school teams before the big games.

This student wanted the equivalent of Naber's for Cherokee. He imagined that this would be a sports bar in the vein of Wild Wings, but catering mainly to the community. As he described it, the old men would gather there in the mornings over coffee and discuss the high school football game while surrounded by EBCI sports memorabilia. Later, the high school athletes would come by with coupons designed especially for them, along with possible free food coupons that would be provided to the coaches to give out as rewards for good practices. The main event would come during home game nights when he hoped that everyone, including the surrounding communities, would come for dinner before the game and, possibly, celebrations afterwards—in short, he wanted to create a new community tradition in Cherokee. He pictured flat screen TVs and EBCI sports memorabilia as decoration—like a “Native” Hooters, he said. His preliminary name was The Braves Drive-In. As he read his business plan presentation, he rarely looked up from the paper he clutched in both hands, staring so intently that he was slightly hunched over. As he kept reading, however, he got more and more excited and spoke faster, even gesticulating at key points he was proud of—such as the name. By the time he ended, a smile spread across his face as everyone nodded in agreement with his plan.

In retrospect, it should not be surprising that the current non-business owners would think of starting businesses that would have some impact on their own lives. It is also not surprising that the ideas for new tourist-oriented businesses that I heard during my fieldwork inside and outside this class came from those currently involved in tourist businesses (one

student was an artist, another a chef at the casino). These suggestions for new tourist-oriented businesses included (as demanded by multiple owners) more family entertainment. This sentiment was echoed in a 2009 report commissioned by the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area and Smoky Mountain Host. The tribal government would act on this request shortly.

Capitalism

Before discussing the history of small businesses and entrepreneurship amongst American Indians, let me delve more deeply into the concept of economic identity. The concept of identity is both rich and impossible. Identity is amorphous, malleable, and easily altered both etically and emically. Thus, our identities are not just generated from within; they are also thrust upon us from external sources. When we are born, we are commonly forced to wear clothing colors that designate gender, when we go to school we are defined by our mascots, when we have a job we are defined by the company. And, most visibly, we are defined by what is deemed by others to be our race and what is deemed to be our culture. We not only define ourselves, but others define our identity and then attach meaning to those identities—in the case of this section, our economic identity. In order to truly understand the impact of these external forces, which may then be internalized, we must deconstruct some of our own ideas about these concepts.

Because economic terminology is not commonly addressed in the wider discourses of anthropology, let me give a brief summary of some basic concepts. This is important not only for understanding the literature, but also for recognizing where many of these concepts are frequently misunderstood, even within some of the texts on economic development that I will review later. In addition, these terms have also been used to vilify American Indians and

Native Nations as they (Native Nations) complicate and combat the notions of their etically-given economic identities.

“Capitalism” Discussion

I agree with other writers who have expressed that today the word “capitalism” and its variants have become distractingly, “broad, ill-defined notions [that] invites ideological grandstanding.” Capitalism and capitalists are much misunderstood concepts both publically and in the wider discourse of academics. The dialogues circulating today (on both sides of the political spectrum) about capitalism as a concept are usually referring to the specific laissez-faire, unchecked capitalism of Jean-Baptiste Colbert. Although an interesting idea, in practice this form of capitalism, i.e., a completely unregulated market, allows greed to flourish amongst large corporations—with monopolies and oligopolies easily forming and leading to the economic persecution of the lower classes of citizens across the globe. In an era in which the terms globalization and capitalism are becoming synonymous with the misguided destruction of developing countries’ economic bases and, indeed, the worldwide economic plunge during the Bush administration, their true meaning is often shrouded and used as a weapon by both sides of partisan battles. It is important to understand this is only one way in which capitalism can manifest. What does capitalism really mean and what impact does this dialogue have for American Indians?

Capitalism: “an economic system in which investment in and ownership of the means of production, distribution, and exchange of wealth is made and maintained chiefly *by private individuals or corporations, especially as contrasted to cooperatively or state-owned means of wealth.*” [Flexner 1994; emphasis added]

Since capitalism, according to this admittedly simple definition of capitalism, involves only an individual or collection of individuals, not a governmental body, Native Nation-owned enterprises cannot fit into this category. Capitalist corporations are deliberately split from any

governmental body because, in a laissez-faire capitalist society, it would be inefficient for a corporation to have to answer to any outside restrictions (thus the term “laissez-faire” or “let-do” policies), other than the workings of the free market itself, which could control the corporation based on ideas other than profit making—community betterment, for example.

The first aspect of this definition of capitalism to note is that there is no purely laissez-faire capitalist society in existence due to governmental or other regulating and distributing structures (the word “chiefly” in the above definition attempts to get this point across). This also implies that a capitalist enterprise can exist in a non-capitalist economy (i.e., the fact that for-profit, private small businesses exist on a reservation does not then make the entire economy capitalist). The second aspect to note is that capitalism is not defined by the ability to earn a profit; non-capitalist enterprises can and do earn profits (this is one of, if not the most, commonly-held misconceptions).

Why is this important to American Indians? Ever since the dawn of the term “noble savage” and its counterpart, the “ecological Indian,” American Indians have battled against stereotypes thrust upon them that to be American Indian you must be “pure” in some manner. These stereotypes dictate ideas such as American Indians must never harm the earth and they must never own businesses that would make a profit. This erroneous belief goes even further to state that having enough money to raise your economic class at all is an extremely “white” thing to do and that the only real American Indians are one who lives in poverty. Sadly, this belief has been held against American Indians for so long that it sometimes becomes internalized.

Today, Native Nations that own casinos are met with angry shouts of “capitalists!” and demands for the rescinding of their “special privileges” by those who have no

understanding of the complex and centuries-old contracts and treaties between the United States and Native Nations (see California below). The irony of the situation, as stated above, is that, in reality, these casinos are owned and operated by the Native Nations and the wealth is distributed by the Native Nation, thus they are not “capitalist” endeavors at all (Cattelino 2008).

“Socialism” Discussion

Native Nation governments have alternative economic policies in the sense that they create for-profit businesses that are specifically designed to be controlled, and answerable, to their larger communities. Even if you do not work in the casino, you will still reap the benefits of the casino through better hospitals, education, and roads. A for-profit corporation is not necessarily a capitalist venture; it is who owns the business, who profits from the business, and the governmental policies encompassing the business that define which economic system it belongs to. This system that many Native Nations choose today is in actuality a form of socialism⁵⁴ which,

is a broad array of ideologies and political movements with the goal of a socio-economic system in which *property and the distribution of wealth are subject to control by the community for the purposes of increasing social and economic equality and cooperation*. This community control may be either direct, exercised through popular collectives such as workers' councils, or indirect, exercised on behalf of the people by the state. As an economic system, socialism is often characterized by state or community ownership of the means of production” (emphasis added Duignan, Sampaolo, and Singh 2007).

⁵⁴ I have noticed that many authors writing about Native American economic development avoid the term “socialism” and choose to instead rename it with some term of their own making (Champagne 2004). I believe that this stems from (1) the mistaken public idea that socialism is associated with communism (“a system of social organization based on the holding of all property in common, actual ownership being ascribed to the community as a whole or to the state” {{298 Flexner, Stuart Berg 1994}}) and/or (2) the avoidance in general of loaded Western economic terms in favor of defining Native Nation economies in new ways, thereby unhampered by Western labels.

But what is the origin of these aforementioned visceral stereotypes and indictments of American Indian capitalism? There are essentially two issues that combine to form this public and political retaliation against Native Nations that are succeeding economically. One is the misunderstanding of capitalism and socialism mentioned above; the other is the double standard applied to American Indians (Cattelino 2010) in the ability to earn income and in profit-sharing/dividends versus per cap distributions. Misunderstandings of Native Nations as sovereign nations and the laws surrounding them compound these issues enormously.

Continuing from above, if we see that the Native Nation ownership of the means of distribution and the distribution itself is not a capitalist system, as others “accuse” Native Nations of being, then where does the animosity come from? One explanation is the classic double standard that has been applied to American Indian behavior for centuries. Part of this double standard claims that it is acceptable, even divinely ordained (Weber, Baehr, and Wells 2002), for white Americans to earn a profit and garner more than a living wage. For indigenous groups, however, profits represent a spoiling of their indigenous economic purity. This is one of the many Shangri-La fables (i.e., stereotypes) that is perpetrated over and over again about the supposed culture of American Indians. In this fable, American Indians have never pursued worldly possessions, nor did they amass wealth—despite much archaeological evidence to the contrary. The subtle destructive element of this myth is that it implies that it is unnatural and against their economic identities for American Indians to live lives beyond a subsistence wage. Furthermore, the American Indian is in the precarious position of also not being able to live *below* the poverty line. To do so is to be “the problem” (Meriam 1928) and proof that American Indians were never meant to, or able to, survive in a white world, thus “proving” the alleged inferiority of American Indians especially in regards to their supposed

inability to cope with the modern world. Being either above or below the line garners both scorn and calls to “solve the problem,” which brings in consultants, researchers, and “solutions.” And it sometimes also brings termination. So the American Indians’ only recourse, in the eyes of the non-Native society, is to straddle the thin line in hopes of quelling the onslaught of consultants.

But what about those Native Nations that dare to earn money—and lots of it? The wrath is felt quickly as politicians and the general public grabs their pitchforks and make way to revoke their “special privileges⁵⁵.” A recent example of this was Governor Schwarzenegger’s campaign against the sovereignty of California Native Nations based on making them pay their “fair share” that helped elect him—this was followed by years of illegal practices against the Indian Gaming and Regulatory Act which were eventually taken to the U.S. Supreme Court who ruled in favor of the nations and IGRA (Mazzetti 2011). This is the second part of the double standard. First, Native Nations are being accused of being too wealthy and/or too American to deserve “special privileges” anymore. Of course, this implies that being American Indian is akin to being a part of a welfare system (again, a reflection of the general lack of legal and political education in regards to Native Nations) and that being an American is somehow tied to material wealth in all of its forms. The accusations of “special privileges” are also interesting as the differences between states (as explained in the earlier example of North Carolina and Virginia), or counties for that matter, is never thought

⁵⁵ Native Nations do and should fear this retaliation. Termination past and present is an ongoing threat. In the past the successful nations, such as the Menominee were terminated due to their success and then quickly became one of the most impoverished. Today the Osage, who own mineral rights in Oklahoma, also face this same threat of termination in terms of their reservation status (Dennison 2012). Furthermore, Kalt notes that in the past, “Self-determination has consistently garnered bi-partisan backing from both Democrats and Republicans in Congress,” but that support, in his 2010 report, has now dropped to 80% Democrat and 20% Republican putting, “policies of self-determination at considerable risk” (Kalt 2011)

of as a “special privilege,” even though one county can have the “privilege” of alcohol while another can revoke that “privilege.”

Second, the Native Nations, after being accused of being too capitalistic, are then accused of promoting a welfare state through per cap distributions. These per cap distributions are generally a percentage of the total profits from a tribal business. If it sounds suspiciously like dividends that get paid yearly to shareholders from a corporations, it is because that is exactly what, in essence, they are (except that they generally have a larger proportion of payout than a standard corporation). Thus, the Native Nation is simultaneously accused of being (1) too capitalist in earning a profit despite the fact that it is socialist in composition and (2) too socialist in its distribution despite the fact that it mirrors a corporate dividend payout. The new wave of American Indians challenging stereotypes and their subsequent economic empowerment must be a disconcerting development for those who do not support the sovereignty of Native Nations. With this background knowledge about these economic concepts and their direct impact on American Indians at hand, we can now look more closely at the history of American Indian entrepreneurialism.

Entrepreneurial History: U.S. American Indians and EBCI

American Indians throughout their history have practiced what we would term entrepreneurialism and the current literature is beginning to discuss this long history (Champagne 2004). But this history is still barely recognized in academia despite the availability of supporting evidence. American Indians (as well as indigenous peoples throughout the Americas) had extensive trade routes well before Europeans arrived. After European arrived, American Indians were the driving force supporting international business networks and trade, supplying Europe with goods that eventually supported the development

of (by European standards) a “native elite” (Wolf 1982:285). Rudi Colloredo-Mansfeld astutely describes a similar problem in the descriptions of Otavolo history,

Given the ancient history of long-distance commerce in the region, its reemergence within the context of a global market for ethnic arts does not signal the corruption of a more “authentic” native Andean way of life. In fact, the absence of merchant Indians, long-distance exchange, and complex deals for “foreign goods” represents a diminishing of indigenous society. [Studies neglecting the Andean’s interest in business] reflects not the natural economy, but *the repression of rural peoples by hacienda owners and urban business interests. Such simplistic descriptions obscure the histories, careers, and aspirations of commercially minded indigenous peoples.* [Colloredo-Mansfeld 1999:124; emphasis added]

Eric Wolf’s famed book, *Europe and the People Without History*, was published almost 30 years ago, but his elucidation of this issue in regards to a land without people for a people without land (in which he specifically discusses the Cherokee (Wolf 1982:284)) is only just recently being addressed, particularly in the realm of economic governance. American Indians’ agency in creating their own economic autonomy, especially in response to the aftermath of the sometimes successful attempts at Native Nation genocide, is only now beginning to be published on.

In 2009 I attended the Southeastern Archaeological Conference (SEAC) in Charlotte, North Carolina. As an anthropologist, I feel that I have to be invested in multiple disciplines in order to be fully engaged with the community that I am working with and so I try to keep my finger on the pulse of current topics in other fields. Therefore I try to stay active in the archaeological community (an unusual endeavor as seen by being the only sociocultural scholar present at this conference)—and hope to continue as I advance in my career. As I watched panel after panel, one in particular immediately stood out. Duane Eseray (also from the University of North Carolina—Chapel Hill) complicated the notion of the “contact” period in the United States. Archaeology can sometimes be seen as a practice of setting

boundaries in order to isolate a field site: spatially, temporally, and geographically. But, as Duane stated, “Interaction, not isolation, defines social groups” (Esarey 2008). As I ruminated over this statement, I thought about books I had recently read in an ethnohistorical course and how they complicate similar notions that inform my own economics-based research. Two questions seem to be at the heart of these issues. First, what is the relationship between economic stability and sovereignty? Second, what is the relationship between economic practices and cultural constructions? Three ethnohistorical books immediately came to mind: Brian Hosmer’s *American Indians in the Marketplace: Persistence and Innovation Among the Menominees and Metlakatlangs, 1870-1920*; Susan Sleeper-Smith’s *Indian Women and French Men*; and H. Craig Miner’s *The Corporation and the Indian*. Beginning with *American Indians in the Marketplace: Persistence and Innovation Among the Menominees and Metlakatlangs, 1870-1920*, Brian Hosmer highlights the idea that American Indians did have a complex understanding of the market and because of this they also understood the ramifications of the new European-inclusive economic system on their culture and could therefore try to minimize the damage done by it. Unlike many other books in which American Indians are presented as making socio-cultural concessions and sacrifices in order to sustain larger cultural values (e.g., passing racializing laws regarding slavery in order to appear more civilized as an attempt to keep at bay the political encroachment of American law into Indian Territory (Miles 2005), Hosmer instead presents the inherent fluidity of societies’ cultural identities.

In doing this he asks,

More ambitiously, can we proceed so far as to suggest that those Menominees and Metlakatlangs who *embraced* these new economic relationships did so in order to maintain a degree of independence through economic modernization? If so, what can that tell us about Menominee and Tshimtsian cultures, or about the complex dance

between change and continuity that all peoples undertake, but that is, seemingly, beyond the grasp of historical Indians? [Hosmer 1999:5; emphasis added]

The first thing I noticed when I read this quote was that Hosmer phrases this change as Indians “embracing” new relationships as opposed to kowtowing to or surrendering to a new system. This gives agency to the Menominees and Metlakatlangs in a way that has not been afforded to Indians frequently. In addition, Hosmer addresses how this “complex dance” is also not allowed for historical Indians in much of the literature. This touches on my work because this concept is not only “beyond the grasp of *historical* Indians”, but is also such a common misconception that it haunts economic development issues regarding Native Nations *today* as tribes begin to engage in (what are ironically termed) American enterprises, such as casinos (Cattelino 2008). As the world’s societies transform themselves through the internet and global marketplaces, rarely questioning their own sense of “culture” except in the occasional debate on whether to adopt a new foreign word or create one internally, American Indians are left with accusations of “selling out” and are charged with not being “real” anymore.

Entrepreneurs are in this category alongside casinos. Long held in American society to be a loner, the entrepreneur is described as individualistic and selfish, rebellious, anti-authority, money-hording, and the subject of public ambivalence—someone they both love and hate (Bird 1989:123). It is this image that is conjured up when current tribal economic development studies claim that American Indians are “culturally” unable to accept the idea of entrepreneurship (Champagne 2004). However, it is my assertion that this notion is not grounded in fact and, in practice, entrepreneurs can, and have been, very active members of their larger communities who redistribute wealth and support community endeavors, thereby contributing to overall community wellness. This notion is beginning to emerge in the

academic literature through the limited discussion of “social entrepreneurs” (applied mostly to entrepreneurs who start non-for-profit organizations, but the term can also be applied to those who start for-profit companies for the greater good and/or a social purpose). These are some among the many types of entrepreneurs that are suited to contributing to the goals of a Native Nation (which, as we have seen are larger in scope than the general U.S. government) through economic growth and community support. Hosmer addresses this directly by saying,

After all, Menominee entrepreneurs still took into consideration the needs of the broader community, cultural values shaped accommodations with the market, and interactions with others, and the overall objective of economic change (so far as one can be discerned) remained not assimilation, but, ultimately, a bolstering of Menominee ethnic identity. *Economic modernization does not equal assimilation*, nor should scholars confuse the two. [Hosmer 1999:153; emphasis added]

Hosmer illustrates this last point in the first chapter when he describes how white agents viewed logging as a powerful engine for cultural change, but Old OshKosh (the Menominee chief from 1795 - 1858) reversed this idea by viewing the larger American need for lumber as a trump card in which to retain the Menominees land and reduce their dependence on annuities, therefore supporting the community and preserving cultural values. Through Hosmer’s portrayal of this moment in history we can see that economic development can not only be contextualized by Native Nations, but can also be used to bolster cultural revitalization projects. He highlights this when saying, “To an important degree, both societies found in economic development a way to preserve unity, independence, and indeed survival” (Hosmer 1999:219). Furthermore, one of Hosmer’s closing statement also supports this notion and is just as applicable today for Native Nations struggling with economic development issues: “The fact that both groups wrestled with changes and attempted *to incorporate the market into existing, albeit evolving, structures* indicates both the importance of heritage and their real concern that they not abandon their pasts” (Hosmer 1999:223)

emphasis added). To complicate and expand out Hosmer's statement, though, it should be added that "the past" is a broad and generic term. It is important to acknowledge that Native Nations, as with other nations globally, do have aspects of their past that they are more than happy to abandon (such as slavery).

Susan Sleeper-Smith's book, *Indian Women and French Men*, also supports these notions. She maintains that, "Indians have existed as viable, distinct people from the earliest times to the present and contend[s] that, while encounter changed indigenous communities, it also encouraged the evolution of strategic behaviors that ensured cultural continuity" (again. I would qualify this statement to reflect that while there are some aspects of "cultural continuity" that are beneficial, other aspects can and should change; Sleeper-Smith 2001:2) and that "U.S. people were, for Indians, another stage in a *continuous process of encounter with foreigners*. The struggle to maintain or improve their position in relation to others, less or more powerful than themselves, invoked a well-established repertoire of responses" (emphasis added; Sleeper-Smith 2001:3) ⁵⁶. Another critical issue is that these Indian women and men were trading long before the introduction of settlers on the Americas; just because they were trading with Europeans does not change the nature of the transactions. In other words, trading with Europeans and settlers did not make Indians more "modern," it did not turn their trading efforts from "trading" to "capitalism"⁵⁷, nor did it suddenly make them into entrepreneurs when they continued what they had already been doing. I would argue that it

⁵⁶ Another quote that highlights this particular point is: "In the western Great Lakes [and I would argue throughout other areas of the U.S.], Indian people persisted, despite forced removal, because diaspora, both forced and voluntary, was a significant part of their past. In the face of overwhelming odds, Indian people were still far from powerless" (Sleeper-Smith 2001, 3)

⁵⁷ It could be argued that the sheer volume of what was being harvested for the Europeans appetite for, for example, beaver pelts, changed the economic dynamic from subsistence trading to a different enterprise. However, my argument is that the *practices* of trading were already well-established and utilized amongst Amer-Indians regardless of the scale of enterprise.

would be difficult to find a more entrepreneurial practice than the early Amer-Indian trading routes where bringing the wrong item to market resulted in a 100 mile march home empty-handed. This economic risk-taking would only be matched by the physical risk-taking as most entrepreneurs today do not have to procure their own food, find shelter in inclement weather, and avoid angering poisonous snakes over a 100 mile walk in order to test a new product.

Miner's *The Corporation and the Indian: Tribal Sovereignty and Industrial Civilization in Indian Territory, 1865-1907* considers a critical juncture in American Indian history and one that reveals much about the economic and political impacts of uneven power structures between the U.S. government and American Indian nations. Despite these structures, however, American Indians both resisted and appropriated the practices of the larger American society at every turn as Miner most straightforwardly addresses the issues of sovereignty for American Indians. Although Hosmer directly, and Sleeper-Smith indirectly, point out that it was not economic issues alone, but a combination of economic turmoil and political manipulation that created dependency, *The Corporation and the Indian* most explicitly illustrates this process when it states that,

Yet, through Indian Territory-wide meetings and conferences as early as 1870's, Indians *did* move to solve the intratribal differences that hindered them in their dealings with corporations. They did form their own corporations. They did petition to be allowed to carry out their own negotiations. They did suggest alternative treaty terms. They did learn that a competitive enterprise system has a capability to accommodate diversity and recognize interests, including cultural ones, through contracts. But they found that in the end politics, not the market, dominated" [Miner 1989:x].

It was not that American Indians were unable compete economically, it was that they were not allowed to express the sovereignty that would allow them to compete, which, in turn, would allow for their control over cultural change and continuity on their own terms.

As I conducted my work on American Indian entrepreneurship, I was bombarded by questions from scholars and others regarding the dissolution of American Indian values, traditions, and cultural practices. However, the ability to appropriate others' practices and use them to your benefit is not a system monopolized by Europeans. Europeans are not considered less European for integrating others' cultural practices because doing so is considered *a part of* their cultural practices. It is a necessary part of every society and every culture. As these three books demonstrate, economics, sovereignty, and sociocultural identity formations are inseparable forces that are changed by each other with the intrusion of outside forces, be they ecological, political, or economic.

History and Business Sustainability

One of the first sets of questions I had to address in this research concerned whether these businesses on the Qualla Boundary were economically successful or, at minimum, whether they were economically-viable and sustainable. The sustainability question was the first I found the answer to as I scoured the literature on their historical business ownership. In it, I found the EBCI has a recorded history of entrepreneurship and small business existence dating back to 1902 with some current businesses being decades-old. Their historically-recorded tourism industry has been active since 1940, with individual entrepreneurship beginning even earlier that century. It is apparent that the EBCI has had a long-standing and thriving business community throughout their history⁵⁸ and that, clearly, there are business practices on the Qualla Boundary that lead to long-term sustainable businesses. Some authors, e.g., Finger 1984 and 1991, and indeed some EBCI citizens I spoke with, have claimed that these early businesses were owned by “white” EBCI citizens, which implies that

⁵⁸ Also, recall from the historical conversation above that the EBCI had formal incorporation as a Native Nation via the Sugar & Silk Company and through tribal logging endeavors.

their successes are somehow diminished. I argue that, regardless of phenotype, they were still EBCI citizens who were successful businesspeople. This separation of citizenry by race only furthers the stereotype that only a white person could be a successful businessperson instead of proclaiming that a citizen of the EBCI was successful.

Particularities of Rural Business and Reservation Business

We've got to dance with who's in the gym. [Susan Jenkins, Cherokee Preservation Foundation, Non-EBCI citizen]

When I moved to the bustling tourist town of Bryson City it was the most rural place I had lived. Its population was under 1,400 permanent residents. I use the term “rural” even though our house was on the side of the mountain directly under the hospital and directly over the train station, the major tourist draw for the town that ran morning to night announcing each ride with long, slow whistles. Despite this downtown location, I discovered that the road our house was technically, according to various postal services, nonexistent (this was remedied the week after my fieldwork ended). Postage was at a premium, certain deliveries could not be made, and our address was rejected by nearly every business that needed to deliver items to us. But, as I would find in my talks with store owners, this was only one problems brought on by living and working in a rural area.

Employees

In regards to the practices and problems of small businesses on reservations, it is important to acknowledge that most reservation businesses are also rural businesses. In this section on small business practices, I explore the major issues and practices of owning a rural business (a topic that has been covered extensively outside of reservations (Gladwin et al. 1989; Buss, Popovich, and Gemmel 1991)).

So, way up Big Cove there, we employed twenty local people. That's a backbone, it's creating employment. I hate Wal-mart; I won't go to Wal-mart; I hate franchises. I won't go to Chevrolet; I broke down in Mississippi, I called a little garage up, kind of like somebody I know between here and Cherokee. I'd rather deal with a small independent business because I am (one), and I support them. [Ron, Talking Leaves bookstore]

The subject of employees was one of the most common topics that came up during my interviews with business owners. As an employer myself, this did not come as a surprise. Hiring your first employee and turning part of your business over to them is one of the most difficult hurdles. It is also a challenging area to manage, second only to finance and accounting. From finding an employee, vetting them, and transferring control (if all goes well), it is a long and difficult process. But this is true for nearly all businesses.

I address this topic here, in the rural discussion in particular, because businesses may have similar issues with employees, but these problems are especially acute in rural areas. There is a significantly smaller population with fewer employees to choose from, which is difficult. If you are a specialty business, such as business consulting firm that needs employees with specific certified training, finding highly-specialized employees within commuting distance can be extremely difficult. This connects to the issue of brain drain lessening the pool of qualified applicants even further. In an American Indian context, brain drain is traditionally referred to as the problem that arises when American Indian students who live on reservations leave to advance their education, but then find that they have no adequate employment opportunities back on the reservation (either due to lack of jobs or competitive jobs) and are therefore forced to work away. This problem can also apply to the inability of reservations to attract American Indian citizens who were not already residing on them due to lack of employment opportunities. Natalie from Tribal Grounds ran into this issue after she finished her work at UNC and wanted to return to the Qualla Boundary. She

explains that, “My job opportunities in this area were none. Didn’t have any job opportunities at museums. . . So it was not possible for me to work as an art educator.”

There is also the issue of seasonal businesses. For landscaping or businesses that cater to tourists, only seasonal help is needed, which may make it difficult to find employees willing to work only a few months out of the year⁵⁹. Alternately, for businesses in more urban environments, especially those that include colleges, these situations are mitigated by hiring students who are available seasonally and only want to work part-time. In addition, there is the issue of drug and alcohol abuse that tends to be higher in rural areas (Van Gundy 2006). With less of a population to choose from, your chances of hiring a problem employee increase.

TERO & Employees

One aspect of employee management that is specific to American Indian businesses is that to be TERO certified, you need to have a certain percentage of tribal citizens on staff. Combine this with the rural problems of finding and keeping a full staff of employees and the overall difficulty of employee recruitment and retention increases significantly.

Interestingly, two topics that I will cover in detail in the later chapter regarding the EBCI’s casino address some of these issues. First is the effects of the per cap payouts from the casino on the workforce. In this case, the per caps’ impact on small businesses is profound since EBCI citizens are able to work part-time and/or seasonally and still make ends meet with the per cap helping during the times of unemployment. Second, a recent

⁵⁹ For some larger independent businesses, like Myrtles Restaurant, employees are offered the opportunity to train for different positions that are open in the off season, so that the employees can work year round if they wish.

JAMA article from a Duke study suggests that per cap payouts have had a suppressing effect on drug and alcohol abuse on the Qualla Boundary⁶⁰.

This study states that members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians who received per capita payments from the tribe's casino were less likely to abuse alcohol and marijuana, according to a study in the Journal of the American Medical Association. Tribal members began receiving a share of gaming revenues in 1996. The study tracked Eastern Cherokee youth from 1993 through 2006 and found a link between well-being and the payments. Tribal youth were better off as adults than older tribal members who did not grow up with the revenues, according to the study. And tribal youth fared "significantly" better as adults than non-Indians, researchers found (McKie 2011i; Cherokee One Feather Staff 2010b).

Although this study was descriptive rather than explanatory (Costello et al. 2010), there are two main roots which can help explain this phenomenon: (1) the links between poverty and inequality of classes (addiction, violence, poor health, etc.) have recently been proven in studies (Wilkinson 2009) and (2) the money from the casino can fund more programs (after school, employment, police training/personnel etc. (Perdue 2005) to combat, prevent, and address alcohol and substance abuse (these include programs like the Analenisgi substance abuse and mental health center, healthy Cherokee substance awareness programs, etc.).

Most small store owners that I spoke with had about two year-round employees. Even in the worst of the recession, they kept those employees on staff. This was difficult and, as Abe put it to one employee he was having a particularly hard time with, "You better be damn thankful that you've got a job right now because I resent every day that you're getting a

⁶⁰ Specifically, alcohol, cannabis, nicotine (dependence only), and other drugs (cocaine, amphetamines, inhalants, opioids, hallucinogens, and sedatives).

check and I'm not." Abe's case of keeping staff employed while not pulling a check himself was not unusual in my findings. To mitigate this large, but necessary expense, some businesses took advantage of EBCI governmental employee programs, such as the one that Natalie from Tribal Grounds Coffee describes here,

And (for) one of our employees here now we used the job bank because we have customers that work in that area. Basically it's like this little organization that takes useful people, not necessarily under 18, but people that have gotten into legal troubles that are working in this program as part of getting up on their feet, basically self help. And we took one of them in and it's a great opportunity because the organization pays for their paycheck if you will agree to work with them and train them and teach them the skills. And then after six months if they want to leave, okay, if they want to stay, they're your employee or if you want to keep them they're your employee. It's wonderful.

It was not unusual for these small businesses to rely on family to differing extents, ranging from occasional emergency substitutions to full-time employment. This was not a cost-saving measure since they were still paying their family members, but family members were more predictable than new and unknown employees; there was also the family peer pressure to keep them on task.

Many stores deliberately cultivated this family-type environment with their employees. This practice was not related to the number of employees, as I found that it occurred in businesses with one employee and through to forty employees. Teresa from Granny's has the upper range of employees during the summer season and, as a restaurant, has many younger people on staff. Additionally, Teresa knows from her TERO reports that 75-80% of her employees at any given time are either enrolled members, parents of enrolled minor children, or married to enrolled members. She says, "I have a lot of what I call babies, a lot of the 14 and 15-year-olds that are just entering the workforce, bussing tables or rolling silverware or something." Her babies, whom she trains and coaches, generally move on to

other opportunities and often do well. She proudly relates this to me as she describes her former “baby” employees who are now doctors, lawyers, police chiefs, teachers, and other PhDs. The result of this familial atmosphere is that these small businesses had dedicated employees that even went as far as to self-police, as Teresa relays here:

They’re family. They just are. We’ve lost some that have passed away. It’s just family. That’s all I can tell you. It’s just family.

We get some that we don’t even want to see coming in the door, but most days—you just got to feel them out and that’s what I said, out here especially, . . . but if you can’t pull your weight and if you don’t work, you won’t be here because [‘the rest of the wait staff’] will weed you out at some point. They’ll either make it so hard on you that you can’t stand it or they’ll just flat tell you. This business, especially, the buffet type, there’s three sections out here and each person’s got about 40 people to wait on at one time. . . . It’s got to be a well-oiled, cohesive unit because if it’s not, it doesn’t work. They police themselves.

One interesting demographic feature of small business employees that my research revealed is that many of the owners who have less than four employees regularly have older women (“In their fifties or older, those are the ones who stay” as I was told by one business owner) as their primary workforce. One owner related that he thought they were more dependable while others supported this sentiment citing that they believed these employees were less likely to have drug or alcohol issues, had less family responsibilities (as they were generally empty-nesters), were not planning on leaving for a new career/better position/college, and/or were just generally more reliable since they had had families to take care of at one time. These problems of rural employment, though, run neck-in-neck with the problems of inventory.

Inventory and Rural Living

Inventory is also major problem that most rural small businesses face (Buss, Popovich, and Gemmel 1991; Gerena 2005). As Natalie from Tribal Grounds Coffee related,

Because we were rural. And it's not easy having relationships with vendors out here, way out here. They don't want to come out here. . . . Being rural is something we plan for because people aren't able to get to you every day like in the city or the metro area like Atlanta. . . See there's a balance between buying, especially when you're rural because you've got to get stuff in quantity. No one is going to deliver rurally one shoebox full of stuff. You know what I'm saying?

These small rural businesses face three primary inventory problems. The first is the distance products must travel affects both availability and cost (this is especially an issue when, in years such as 2009, there are challenges to travel such as snowstorms and landslides). The second is that there is a dearth of suppliers, raising costs and availability. There is also a third problem that one government administrator describes here, "But that goes back to the issue here and it's not Cherokee, it is rural, it's the SDP syndrome, the same damned people [inventory providers] that have not had the experience." In essence this means that, in a rural environment, you have a limited (sometimes single) choice of whom you can work with. The internet has had an impact on this rural effect, but, as I found, getting the product delivered to a rural address, along with the high shipping costs, will continue to remain a road block for the near future. Although this is not as much of an issue for stores that specialize in local crafts or consulting firms, this can be a challenge for businesses like restaurants and coffee houses, which rely on a steady stream of fresh items.

CHAPTER 5

BOUNDING AMERICAN INDIAN BUSINESSES

Introduction

It's better here in Cherokee than the surrounding counties, I think, but a lot of people have to move off, and I think it's still [that way]. And even here, too, in order to start a profession and to get to the point that you can move back, because the salaries are not as high as in the cities, there's not that many jobs. [Darlene Waycaster, Chamber of Commerce]

The Smoky Mountain Cherokee Chamber of Commerce (COC) sits in a two-story log cabin on the main tourist drag in Cherokee. On its right, it is flanked by a building whose side is covered in an intricate graffiti-styled mural collage of American Indian imagery: faces of American Indian men with feathers in their hair, eagles, bears, turtles, foxes, and the mountains. At the time I was there, Darlene Waycaster⁶¹, a local resident (non-EBCI) was head of the COC. Originally, it had started as a group of concerned business owners on the Qualla Boundary called The Heart of Cherokee (in conjunction with the Cherokee Preservation Foundation (Waycaster 2009b). Eventually, it became so successful that it was taken over, financed and run, by the EBCI. They are responsible for putting together the yearly travel brochures (approximately 40,000 of them in 2009) for tourists containing all of the information about the calendar, businesses, map, and attractions on the Qualla Boundary. They also provide a web page for businesses on their website, as well as monthly breakfasts, hosting special events (such as information sessions about issues like greenways),

⁶¹ Matthew Pegg is now the executive director.

training classes (the most popular being the free employee training Qualla-T course) and informational newsletters for local businesses. As a tribal organization, the COC has an impact on all of the boundaries I discuss below. In determining who can have membership in the COC they decided on the widest inclusion level expanding the COC availability past EBCI citizens or even the Qualla Boundary to all businesses in Swain and Jackson counties since the Qualla Boundary sits on both. Representationally, in addition to printing the most well-circulated promotional visitor material for the EBCI, they also mediate between businesses and the EBCI on issues such as appropriate signage regulations and new district guidelines. As Diane said, “So it's just rethinking [these issues] to where it works for the businesses and the Tribe to make Cherokee a better place for everyone” (See figure 5.1).



Figure 5.1: Cherokee Chamber of Commerce.

During my fieldwork I frequently drove the winding two-lane road that climbs steadily up one of the oldest mountain ranges in the world to the Qualla Boundary. The

hairpin turns through the forest emerge an hour past the last major city of Asheville. Occasionally, the dense forests break just long enough to catch a glimpse of the rolling blue vista of the Great Smoky Mountains that draw eleven million tourists a year (Stynes, Hornback, and Propst 2010). As hotels begin to appear, there is a sign announcing: “WELCOME Cherokee Indian Reservation.” This marks the beginning of the geographic boundary where my research takes place. The space that I work in is bounded physically as the Qualla Boundary, which consists of approximately 56,000 acres which is primarily held in federal trust. In addition, the population I work with here is bounded as well since the EBCI is a federally recognized Native Nation whose citizenship qualifications are determined internally. The representational boundaries of this particular space will be discussed later in Chapters Five and Seven. But in contrast to this simple facade of “boundedness” is the complex reality of these physical and political boundaries which historically have been both actively ignored and aggressively assaulted—and which are currently contending with a continuance of attempts to dissolve and manipulate them. These boundary delineations have complications and consequences that can both bolster and hinder not only the EBCI economy as a whole, but also the small businesses that choose to operate there.

One of these effects can be seen through the sovereign status of the reservation that, as we have seen, allows the EBCI government to levy its own taxes and provide direct support for economic stimulus. The EBCI nation also has exclusive jurisdiction over determining its citizenship which, for this particular nation, is based on proof of lineal descent from the Baker Roll in addition to a minimum blood quantum of 1/16th as calculated from the Baker Roll. This citizenship then can, for example, provide for the protection of

intellectual resources and cultural assets through laws like the Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990, along with many other types of protections afforded by citizenship in a nation. Alternatively, however, the physical boundaries combined with their placement in the mountains severely curtail the availability of space for small businesses. In addition, the EBCI blood quantum minimum can lead to situations in which businesses owned for generations may pass out of the hands of citizens via marriage; this therefore results in complex issues of economic drain via citizenship exclusions⁶². In the following chapter, I will discuss how these issues of boundaries have impacted the small business owners on the Qualla Boundary as well as citizens who have chosen to locate their businesses off of the Boundary. In doing so, I will employ the role of the EBCI's small businesses to illustrate how the many complexities of these citizenship and land boundaries, as well as the boundaries of representation, play out on the ground today.

Legal

As I looked at the elements that hindered and/or aided these businesses on the Qualla Boundary, I quickly realized that a critical component of this understanding was the issue of boundaries. But the subject of boundaries is volatile for Native Nations because there is no way to talk about these boundaries without talking about contestation and conflict throughout history and contemporarily. Boundaries of territory and citizenry have always been crucial, both historically and contemporarily, to the subject of American Indian rights. The most predominant strategy to reduce—or eliminate entirely in some circumstances—American

⁶² Although I frame this issue in a negative context in order to illustrate the effects of the process, I would be negligent if I left the impression that the EBCI citizens were against this policy in any way. In fact, many, in reference to its effect on businesses specifically, are pleased that the impending turnover of business ownership would oust what are perceived as business owners who have unfairly dominated the downtown Cherokee market for decades.

Indian rights is via the manipulation of these boundaries in attempts to metamorphose or dissolve them. This is seen on a federal level in the pendulum-like policies of the United States government which have swung to the extremes of either eliminating Native Nations or protecting their inherent sovereignty. The legal statuses, summed up in a simplistic form here, are explained in the following sections:

- **Land:** In its simplest form, there are three main categories of land holdings that jurisdictionally impact Native Nations in Indian Country today: (a) Trust: land titles held by the United States government in trust, in which the state has no authority, for the exclusive use of American Indians (the Qualla Boundary is exclusively trust land), (b) Fee Simple: this is private land ownership with a deed that the owner holds for the land, and (c) land owned and controlled by the U.S. government, such as roads. In the case of traditional “checker-boarding,” trust and fee simple lands are interspersed and can be non-contiguous, compounding jurisdictional issues between the state, federal government, and Native Nations. In practice, there are many variations between these two types of land holdings (e.g., a Native Nation can own land, but not have it held in trust).
- **Citizenship:** Each Native Nation is recognized by federal and tribal law as having an inherent sovereign right to determine their own citizenship. Federal policy prohibits a person from being a member of more than one Native Nation, even if both parents come from different nations. This barrier has far-reaching consequences for Native Nation citizenship beginning with the loss of one’s citizenship via lowered blood-quanta that do not meet the minimum requirements of some Native Nations. For example, if an EBCI citizen who had 1/16th blood quantum (the minimum) married a full-blood citizen of another Native Nation, their children would be ineligible for enrollment in the EBCI nation because only the EBCI blood quantum would count towards EBCI enrollment (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians 2008a:49). It is important to note, however, that many Native Nations (the EBCI excluded) have their own policies allowing for the dual enrolling of citizens in defiance of this federal policy (this practice is more common amongst Native Nations in Alaska, especially in respect to minors, than with those within the contiguous U.S.).

Land

The first boundary that I will examine is the physical boundary of land that shapes the market. The question here is who can have access to this land and therefore the economic

market, while our overriding issue is that of scarcity. The EBCI was not subject to allotment in 1887 and purchased their own land, thus their land is represented as fairly contiguous (although Snowbird and some recently purchased land is separated from Cherokee, there is not the Allotment checker-boarding that we see on other reservations), but it remains partitioned by other jurisdictional issues. Instead of reservation land being divided between EBCI citizens and non-citizens, as in the issue of checker-boarding, it is divided between the EBCI and US governmental entities, such as the roads. Because of the Qualla Boundary's singular location which provides an entrance to the GSMNP, there are major freeways next to, and small highways directly through, the Qualla Boundary that are owned and managed by the state of North Carolina. This means that any improvements or modifications must be approved by the state. Everything from repairing a bridge to adding a pedestrian greenway (a type of walkway) in order to increase the safety of EBCI citizens who walk to work, as well as tourists who would like to safely walk between the attractions at Cherokee, must go through lengthy approval processes at the state or federal level. Furthermore, the Qualla Boundary straddles two state counties: Swain and Jackson⁶³.

The impacts of this process have stifled the growth of many businesses. One example of this difficulty that was conveyed to me during interviews, and which is rarely addressed, is internet access. In the past, major corporations refused to invest in the internet infrastructures of rural areas due to the low profit margin. As a result of this, the EBCI began and now own their own fiber optic network, BalsamWest. This network provides internet access to three

⁶³ As an interesting side note, it was not until after I had left my fieldwork in 2010, that Google Maps, known worldwide for their intense and detailed mapping of the world via cars and satellite imagery, had Cherokee, NC listed in their database at all. They also had no reference to any reservations in the United States, despite their jurisdictional importance, until roughly the same time period. Currently there is a very faint, light grey designation to reservations, but no text explaining why it is a different color or acknowledging the reservations.

states and countless small rural communities which previously had been considered too small to provide access to (Hubbs 2010). The unfortunate aspect of this situation, however, is that only a handful of the business owners I interviewed had internet access at their businesses, let alone websites for their businesses. The complication was that, although the cable lines were near their businesses, the roads were owned by the state and would have to be modified to get the line to their side. The state approval process is such a lengthy hurdle that this project, considered of no urgency, has simply been shelved thus far.

Soon after I left, the Cherokee Broadband Enterprise was begun. As it states, it “is a tribally-owned enterprise that is working to provide internet connectivity to the most challenging parts of the Qualla Boundary and to offer quality, competitively priced service to those who already have internet service. Cherokee Broadband Enterprise has been in existence for approximately two years and is working hard to complete the construction of the towers and systems necessary to reach as many unserved residences and businesses as possible. Cherokee Broadband also provides wireless internet service to the downtown Cherokee business district, Saunooke Village, Ceremonial Grounds and the Expo Center” (Cherokee Broadband 2011).

There is also the issue of general land accessibility, i.e., land scarcity on the Qualla Boundary. Much of the land on the Qualla Boundary—and, indeed, throughout Western North Carolina—is unusable due to its location the mountains. First, it is impractical to build on; it is too expensive, *if* can be done at all. Second, the scenery and forest are of major importance to tourists as well as residents who still use it extensively. The result is that most of the EBCI’s land is unusable without massive destruction of the environment and the beautiful mountains that the tourists come to see. As Chief Hicks commented regarding the

land and cultural representational issues, “We don’t have the land base to compete with the people over the mountain. Arts and crafts – that’s where this Tribe needs to go. We have got to create a specific market. We have to display, in the right way, our abilities” (See figure 5.2).



Figure 5.2: One of the dangers of building in the mountains—ice.

Leasing

There are two main business districts on the Qualla Boundary in Cherokee and most of this serviceable land, and the buildings on it, have been owned by the EBCI government or, for individuals, in possessory holding for decades. Possessory holding is trust land ultimately held by the EBCI, but which operates as if it was fee simple land owned by an individual. Subject to some restrictions and committee or Tribal Council reviews, the land

can be built on and transferred to another EBCI citizen (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians 2008a) or leased for generations (land leases of 50-100 years are not uncommon and some leases can then be passed down via inheritance). This means that the rental price for a new business person who is not part of a family that owns the land is very high, if even available at all (for comparison, in neighboring Bryson City lease prices are about \$4-\$8 per square foot while in Cherokee they are \$12-\$16 per square foot, putting the price of some small shop leases, roughly 11x11 feet square, at \$3,000 per month). Additionally, the EBCI leasing office requires that people buy a bond for a retail lease, a practice that is decades out of date (Seagle 2009c). Consequently, many of the businesses on the Qualla Boundary are family owned and passed down through that family in one form or another (i.e., sometimes closing down one shop and opening another type of store in its place as it is passed down). Also, the proximity of this land to the entrance to the GSMNP makes this prime property for tourist-based businesses, further adding to the price of rent and business ownership as the businesses need to be located in the contained area that tourists can reach. On top of these elements, the competition for space is increased through the EBCI's above mentioned efforts to promote small business ownership on the Qualla Boundary. Compounding these issues, at that time, was the problem of the lengthy BIA delays for leasing changes. As Joel Queen stated,

Yeah, you have to wait six months for the lease to clear the BIA. That's how backed up the paperwork is. Six months, people have made the mistake and said, 'Yeah, we'll go ahead and lease you the place, we'll get the paperwork done and get it down to the BIA.' Well, before the lease gets back from BIA, they've had a disagreement with the owners and they've already lost their lease before the original lease comes back.

They're already kicked out of the building before they're even legally supposed to be open. People would put their time and money into different businesses. They've opened up coffee shops and other things and borrowing money for it and everything else and then end up being kicked out of the building before the lease ever gets back because of something that the landlord didn't do or some disagreement between you and the landlord.

In late 2011 the DOI proposed the most comprehensive changes to the Indian land leasing regulations to date. These mainly address troublesome bureaucracy issues at the BIA including long delays and lengthy approvals processes (so, for example, some proposals dictate that BIA decisions must be made with 30 days, that approval must occur unless there is compelling evidence not to, etc (McKie B.P. 2011c). It remains to be seen if the newly-proposed changes to the BIA procedures will rectify situations like this. All of these factors come together to create a scarcity of available business locations and this, unfortunately, means that citizens need to locate off-boundary in some instances⁶⁴. This significantly reduces their access to this market, for both tourist and locals, as it is generally better for business to be located near a more populated area regardless of the business. More ramifications of this diaspora will be discussed below. It should also be noted, though, that it is the EBCI and its citizens who own the land, therefore leasing is in and of itself a part of the business market. It provides a steady and reliable income stream that circulates within the community to some citizens and the EBCI either through leasing it out or through owning a business on it themselves.

To counter some of these constraints, the EBCI are attempting to buy new parcels of land for future development (the EBCI bought 793.58 acres in Cherokee County at a cost of \$6,414,828 of both trust (tribal) and non-trust (non-tribal) land (Otwell 2010). This is a delicate process, however, as putting tribally-owned land into federal trust takes it out of the tax base and, for that reason, it is not welcomed by many states and counties (Lambert

⁶⁴ Another result is that businesses may have to relocate within the Qualla Boundary (at large cost) after having taken the first lease they could get to start their business, then finding themselves in a bad leasing situation and waiting it out until a better one came along. This has happened with both Tribal Grounds and Cherokee By Design.

2007:211). On the other hand, if a Native Nation, like the EBCI, is acquiring land for economic development, the new economic stimulus may offset the loss of tax revenue for that county and state. Businesses located on this land would most likely have a substantial amount of support from the EBCI, county, and state to ensure economic success⁶⁵. This obviously begs the question, will the purchasing of more land for economic development by the EBCI bring new growth or, instead, thin the tourist market by drawing customers away from the Qualla Boundary and its businesses?

Citizenship

That's the whole thing is I can't even inherit what my dad has worked his whole life for. The only thing that I kind of regret, and I say just kind of but not really, but I kind of wish there were times that he would have helped me start a business somewhere else because I would love to do what I'm doing but I wanted to have a trading post that might still be standing there in a hundred years that maybe my grandkids or my great grandkids would be running because that's the kind of business that I'm in.
[Abe, small business owner, First Descendant]

On the local level the boundary of citizenship is important because it addresses the question of: How does the EBCI allow and, even more so, encourage citizens (and non-citizens) to participate in the market?

In addition to the pragmatic benefits of locating a business on the Qualla Boundary, this choice, as conveyed to me through interviews (as I have touched on in the previous “buy local” section and will address later as well), also indicated a large measure of support for the EBCI, not just economically, but as a community member. Many of the business owners that

⁶⁵ This was reflected in ads that I saw: “What does this mean for area land values and to you? As in past developments such as this and in a market that is at the lowest it's been, prices should rise rapidly. With construction of the [new EBCI] casino, comes jobs and with people moving to the area, comes the need for great locations in residential developments. [The EBCI] are pumping institutional money into the area and sophisticated investors have begun purchasing. Most people want to invest alongside others that have already begun the new upward trend with the stagnation of the stock market, this is an opportunity! Developers are very motivated to move land and many great deals have been made . . . The upcoming *Great American Land Sale* [near Murphy in Cherokee County is starting]. Make your move today and invest in your future” (emphasis added).

I spoke with conveyed that they located on the Qualla Boundary partially out of an obligation, both economically and in loyalty, to that community. As Natalie describes, “We knew we wanted to open a place for Cherokee. There was no place where we gathered in public. We’re the only place still right now. There are no bars. There are no pubs. There are restaurants where people gather. . . . [We wanted to show] that we’re here to stay. That we’re not just here to make our money and leave. That kind of thing. And we’re not here to exploit the Cherokee culture.” Bethany (non-EBCI citizen) notes of her store on the Qualla Boundary, “See that’s something else I do. I am a networker here and the local people use it for their office. I love that. They have people meet them here. I just love it.”

Like most other nations, complications of citizenship arise and can have adverse effects on small businesses. For the EBCI, the issues of citizenship are made more complex by a blood quantum system which mandates a minimum of 1/16th as calculated from the Baker Roll to remain a citizen. For businesses, this means, in the most simplistic terms, that if an EBCI business owner whose blood quantum is legally 1/16th marries a non-EBCI citizen, her children would then be First Descendants⁶⁶. If these First Descendants do not marry an EBCI citizen, they will not be able to pass their businesses, if located on the Qualla Boundary, on to them. When the First Descendant passes, her business will be evaluated and then the children could receive fair market value from the EBCI government in compensation if the new lease is not granted (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians 2008a). This conflict between responsibility to community, especially as a liminal (neither full citizen, nor non-citizen) First Descendant or child thereof, in locating on the Qualla Boundary and responsibility to family in order to ensure the continuation of said business in locating of off

⁶⁶ This is the legal and common use term for people whose parent(s) are EBCI citizens, but who do not qualify for full citizenship benefits themselves (discussed below) due to a low minimum blood quantum.

the Qualla Boundary has played out many times as business owners struggle with the decision of where to locate (See Appendix D for specifics on current enrollment numbers and related information).

Abe Smith grew up in one of the most prominent EBCI citizen business-owning families on the Qualla Boundary, although his legal blood quantum rendered him a First Descendant. His father was one of the first to open large hotels and he had amassed an enormous amount of business property spanning nearly the entire length of the downtown area highway through what is now known as the Cultural District of Cherokee. His father's businesses began over forty years ago in 1972 and now include hotels, restaurants, and gift stores geared towards both tourists and locals (Porter Gaunt 1997). His dedication to the health of the EBCI economy as well as his service to the community is known throughout the region, making him, according to Abe and others I interviewed, one of the most respected men on the Qualla Boundary. His dedication to the EBCI economy took many forms, but the most noticeable was his insistence on locating all of his businesses physically within the Qualla Boundary. This is especially provocative when you take in to consideration that Abe's father, at the time, had no legal heirs to continue his businesses on the Qualla Boundary once he passed.

Citizenship Reformulations

The EBCI's sovereign right to determine their own enrollment qualifications internally was restored in 1957. From 1959 to 1963, the blood quantum was $1/32^{\text{nd}}$, but was subsequently voted on to re-establish the $1/16^{\text{th}}$ minimum after that time. For the 1986 charter it was decided that these citizens with $1/32^{\text{nd}}$ blood quantum would be grandfathered into the new citizenship laws, thus allowing a citizen with $1/32^{\text{nd}}$ blood to stay on the rolls. However,

this would not include his/her children (if the spouse did not have enough blood quantum to equal 1/16th for the children). Specifically for Abe, this ruling means that he and his siblings do not have enough blood quantum to be citizens. His father did, however, have a hand in forming another section of the charter which stated that “first generation descendants” (i.e., Abe and his siblings) *could inherit* from an enrolled member, thus assuring that his business stayed in the family for one more generation⁶⁷.

As a result, Abe can inherit his father’s businesses, but the fear of loss has had an impact. Recently, the latest business Abe started was located off of the Qualla Boundary. Similarly, another prominent business family (relatives of Abe’s) in Cherokee began to buy land just off of the Qualla Boundary in the 1980’s and built a substantial number of businesses there. This ensures that they will always be next to the community, but will retain more secure property rights. This fear of property loss is justified as seen in the newest roll audit completed in February 2010, which identified 1,405 “actionable” citizenship files (causes range from lack of birth certificate to no verifiable link to the Baker Roll). This means that many current citizens could have their citizenship revoked in the future, although no decision or action towards a decision has been taken by the EBCI tribal council as of this time. In addition, a complicated incident arose in 2011 in which land was taken over by the EBCI government without compensation after a will had been found to be insufficient to pass the land to the First-Descendant (McKie 2011h). Although this issue involved a specific set of unusual circumstances, the reverberations were felt as the implications for business owners could be severe in these cases. This obviously leads to a well-founded concern about business longevity when owners choose to locate off-boundary. Recently the EBCI have

⁶⁷ This extension of benefits to First Descendants was not entirely without precedent as they are also already allowed to utilize some EBCI resources, such as schooling and health care (Finger 1991).

passed (and are currently proposing) more citizenship regulations that would further restrict their enrollment. For example, the EBCI have chosen to include DNA testing for paternity, at a cost of \$140 (\$195 per family unit) paid by the individual, for all of their new enrollment applicants (including adoptees) beginning in July of 2010 (EBCI Enrollment Office 2010). At the Tribal Council in September 2011, an ordinance was passed that, if ratified, would become effective Dec. 1 and limit enrollment into the EBCI to those persons under the age of 19 (EBCI Enrollment Office 2011). Unfortunately, these types of inheritance issues not only can cause successful businesses to leave the Qualla Boundary, taking away valuable tax dollars, but they also take the knowledge of how to make a business successful with them, contributing to further brain drain.

Brain Drain

Like the negative consequences of land scarcity, here again we see the specters of brain drain and economic drain. When successful business owners, such as the family example above, decide to locate off-Qualla Boundary, they take generations of business knowledge with them. Another key aspect is that brain drain does not affect just one business. The knowledge and resources offered by that business in a supportive, collegial environment are now gone. This can be seen as Natalie emphasizes the reliance on community in her description of how she manages to keep her business stable in a rural environment:

Another good thing to do as a business is to make friends with your local businesses. Whether you're selling stuff from them or not is irrelevant. If you can go and eat breakfast at the local breakfast place on a regular basis, somewhat regular because we own a business, but if you can be a customer to other businesses then when the time comes for you to need some inventory-like I need spoons right now. I'm going to go to Peter down the road and ask, "Please, can I buy some spoons from you" or "Please, can I buy some register paper", because you might not have the type of register paper in your community that you need right away. And your food service dude is not on

the phone or is on vacation because he sold you things that are way too high priced and now he's in Maui. And he can't meet your needs.

Proximity encourages a support network that is stronger than the sum of its parts. The entire system becomes weakened when you lose parts. Not only do you lose the physical connection of borrowing items in times of crisis, for example, but you also lose the exchange of information about how to run a business. In addition, you also lose the camaraderie that comes from this shared experience. But this is more than a feel-good benefit; these interactions are the basis for valuable information exchange on the current business climate and for collective action. This can be seen in activities such as the formation of the Chamber of Commerce that was initially created by the business people on the Qualla Boundary.

Economic Drain

The implications for economic drain are just as concerning. When citizens choose, or are forced, to operate off of the Qualla Boundary, the EBCI lose their tribal taxes, their leasing taxes, and their ability to keep money circulating within the community, among other consequences. In some cases it is not just the business that gets located off of the Qualla Boundary. It is not unusual for the whole family to move off Qualla Boundary in these cases for the convenience of being near (or living in the same physical space) as their business. This is a critical problem because economies are like a bucket of water. A solid bucket will hold a lot of water (i.e., community money) and left alone it can hold a mostly self-sustaining level of water. If you put a hole in it, via citizens located off-Qualla Boundary or chain restaurants in which the money leaves the community, then you have to keep pouring more water into it from elsewhere to prevent it from becoming empty. Taking this to the next logical step, it would be even better to have a self-sustaining community that also has an

outside “water source”. For the EBCI, this is their tourism industry and their Harrah’s Casino.

Scarcity

One of the fundamental elements that underlie much of these discussions is that of scarcity. Land and citizenship issues are deeply affected by scarcity in complex ways that can have both negative as well as positive consequences for the EBCI and other Native Nations on reservations. One of the primary issues that all Native Nations must wrestle with (some, like the EBCI, more than others) is scarcity of utilizable land. These issues of land and citizenry are deeply intertwined. For all of the drawbacks associated with the EBCI’s inheritance and blood quantum laws, they do help to safeguard EBCI citizens’ access to the resources they need—especially for those starting businesses. There are few nations in the world today who have had to wrestle with a limited amount of land for a large population, so there is little in the way of practices available as examples for how to provide for citizenry in this situation. Although EBCI citizens are free to purchase land elsewhere in the U.S. and relocate, in doing so they relinquish some of their benefits of living on the Qualla Boundary as an EBCI citizen (such as tax status). The legal authority of the EBCI to keep their own population at a relatively stable growth rate (i.e., the population is increasing in a stable, non-exponential manner) via blood quantum requirements assures that there can be enough resources to provide for this citizenry in the future through land purchases, entrepreneurial funding, etc. In other words, if the growth rate is not accelerating rapidly, a Native Nation can prepare in advance for the resources that they may need to provide for their citizenry in the future, while an exponential population growth rate can make it difficult for a Native Nation to sustain its provision of resources.

But how does having a quasi-limited population help a business person? One benefit is the reduction of competition. As a simplistic example from an artist's standpoint, the less competition there is for a hand-carved clan mask, the higher the price she can charge. Because this process involves a lifetime of training and dedication, the higher price means that an artist can actually make a living off of her craft and continue making the craft and teaching techniques to others. With considerable competition, however, this process can come to an abrupt halt as artists are forced out of their profession due to severe drops in the prices of their items, leaving them unable to support themselves. This inability to support oneself then leads to a lack of time to create more crafts, leaving the artists without time or money to create. This curtails the longevity of the market and can even cause its collapse. Keeping the citizenship bounded means that the market, in terms of citizens, is kept small, thus bolstering its longevity⁶⁸. As we will see in the Indian Arts and Crafts Act discussion below, keeping the population of American Indian artists bounded can turn in to a federal case.

In the same way, the scarcity of land keeps the physical market bounded, which may be a contributing factor to its longevity. This scarcity is beneficial for those tourist businesses in Cherokee as the tourists are then concentrated in a few specific areas and, therefore, the businesses see more consumers in general (as we have seen in Chief Hick's earlier comments about having the land base to compete with the people "over the mountain" and as we will shortly see in the discussion of Gatlinburg sprawl). But, this leaves the question, why don't the business owners who don't have access to these areas all just move their businesses to the

⁶⁸ This is obviously a fine line as having a population that is too small leaves few to no people left to inherit the businesses and trade practices.

other side of the Qualla Boundary dividing line? After all, the consumers are not physically confined to shopping on the Qualla Boundary's market. This where Bourdieu's concept of social and cultural capital can provide some illumination.

Thus far I have suggested that the scarcity of land and citizenry is actually a contributing factor to the longevity of the business market (especially the tourist market) on the Qualla Boundary. I now further argue that the bounding of the land, *as a representation of the EBCI people*, means that businesses on that boundary have access to a social capital, via the networking of people to land, that eludes other tourist towns that are not bounded in this way⁶⁹. The easiest example of this is nearby Gatlinburg, Tennessee.

Gatlinburg is similar to Cherokee in that it also sits at the entrance of the GSMNP and has a business-intensive downtown area. However, although its location brings tourists (unless you are familiar with the alternate route, you are forced to drive through the wall-to-wall traffic of the downtown area), its content is similar (if not exactly the same in some cases) to any other tourist town surrounding the GSMNP—all of which bank on an association as a “mountain town.” It has many of the same stores, same fudge, same t-shirts, etc. In other words, the physical space of Gatlinburg provides no unique cultural capital that cannot be accessed in another mountain tourist town.

In addition, there is the sprawl of Gatlinburg. Since there is no physical boundary, *per se*, to Gatlinburg (i.e., one that is demarcated to the visitor as being “on” or “off” of Gatlinburg land), businesses can and do extend further and further from the epicenter of the town. Factory Outlets malls, Dollywood, enormous mini-golf and go-cart parks, and elaborately large restaurants line the highway for miles. Unfortunately, the further you get

⁶⁹ I am using a dash of Actor Network Theory here since I am envisioning the land as an actor in this network that contains its own transferable cultural capital.

from the epicenter, the more diluted the steady stream of actual consumers is. Businesses that hope to sell to the crowd brought in by the GSMNP find that the competitive sprawl makes the longevity less likely because consumers are faced with a seemingly unending supply of repetitive choices.

In Cherokee, however, the physical land of the Qualla Boundary provides its own cultural capital that can only weakly, if at all, extend past the boundary line (Colloredo-Mansfeld 1999:196). Businesses past the boundary line are just not considered “as Cherokee” as those within⁷⁰. The land itself and its designated boundaries contain the cultural capital that tourists seek. Businesses within that boundary have, via social capital, the association that also bestows upon them Cherokee-ness whether or not they are citizens. This also connects to non-tourist businesses as well, in the sense that having your business located within this boundary signals your (and/or your perspective on your) social capital, and thus cultural capital, as an EBCI community member. Therefore, even though scarcity may be an issue in some markets, here, as we have seen, scarcity may provide the cushion for solid, long-term economic sustainability.

Culture Legalities: The Indian Arts and Crafts Act

Although a section on representational delineations may not at first appear to belong under the heading of legalities, there are times in which the ability of the Native Nations to define their own citizenry is crucial, not just for local issues, such as levying taxes, but also for larger issues such as the protection of intellectual resources and cultural assets. One example of this is the Indian Arts and Crafts Act (IACA; See figure 5.3). The problem of

⁷⁰ Economically, they also suffer, similarly to the Gatlinburg sprawl businesses although on a smaller scale, from the fatigue of being far from the downtown area that is easily accessed by tourists.

fraudulent claims of “Indian Made” goods became so overwhelming in the United States that in 1990 the federal IACA was passed⁷¹. This act

is a truth-in-advertising law that prohibits misrepresentation in marketing of Indian arts and crafts products within the United States. It is illegal to offer or display for sale, or sell any art or craft product in a manner that falsely suggests it is Indian produced, an Indian product, or the product of a particular Indian or Indian Tribe or Indian arts and crafts organization, resident within the United States. [U.S. Department of Interior 2010]

Therefore, this act makes it illegal for an individual to claim that a piece of art or jewelry is “Cherokee” unless it is, indeed, made by a Cherokee artist.

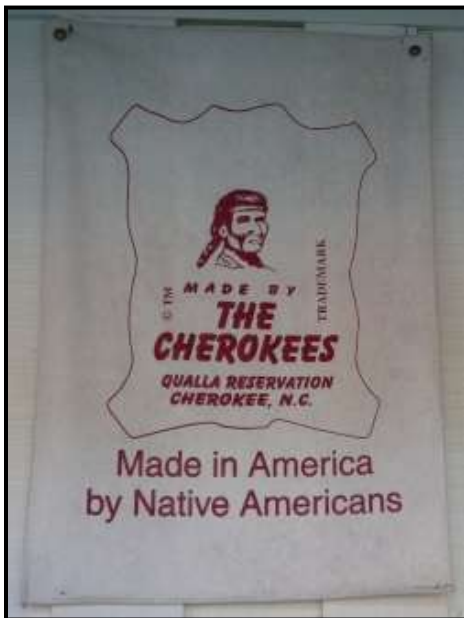


Figure 5.3: Sign on a Qualla Boundary storefront.

⁷¹ The 1990 IACA was, in fact, built upon the earlier 1935 IACA that never had prosecutions brought under it due to its poor structure that made it difficult to prosecute and its small penalties: “(49 Stat. 891; 25 U.S.C. 305 et seq.; 18 U.S.C. 1158-59) Any person who shall **willfully** offer for sale any goods....as Indian products or Indian products of a particular Indian tribe or group.... when such person knows such goods are not Indian products or are not Indian products of the particular Indian tribe or group, shall be guilty of a misdemeanor and be subject to **a fine not exceeding \$2,000 or imprisonment not exceeding six months, or both** such fine and imprisonment.

This Act applies to any federally or state recognized Native Nation, but the three Cherokee Nations (EBCI, Cherokee Nation, and the United Keetoowah Band) issued a joint resolution in 2008 condemning anyone who advances their career by claiming to be Cherokee when they are not citizens of one of the three Cherokee Nations. In 2001, The EBCI Tribal Council furthered this joint effort by passing a resolution (No. 6, 2011) to establish the Cherokee Identity Protection Committee to combat the nearly 212 groups claiming to be Cherokee tribes (to date, as compiled by the Cherokee Nation's Fraud List; McKie 2011o). Although many citizens told me that they supported this resolution, many others (speaking to me personally and publically in the One Feather) were also careful to note that if the BIA does recognize one of these allegedly Cherokee tribes, that they will respect that decision. Instead, they specify that it is the incredibly problematic process of state recognition that they take issue with. Although there exists a federal umbrella of protection in the IACA, individual nations can and do bolster this Act in their own way. The IACA was also recently given a boost in July 2010 in the form of an amendment which now allows all federal law enforcement officers to investigate and enforce laws that were also strengthened with higher fines and penalties. For fraudulent works with a total sales transaction amount of \$1,000 or more, a first-time violation by an individual will result in a fine of up to \$250,000, imprisonment of up to five years, or both. A first-time violation by a business will result in a fine of up to \$1 million. For smaller cases with first-time violators, if the total sale amount is less than \$1,000, an individual will face a fine of up to \$25,000, imprisonment of up to a year, or both, and a business will face a fine of up to \$100,000. In the case of a subsequent violation, regardless of the amount for which any item is offered or

displayed for sale, or sold, an individual could be fined, imprisoned for up to 15 years, or both; and a business could be fined up to \$5 million (U.S. Department of Interior 2010).

Before this act, it was common for artists who were not citizens of any Native Nation to create pieces of art and claim that it was an authentic and/or traditional item made by an American Indian artist. For Native Nations, such as the Hopi, this problem was an attack on their religion as non-Hopi artists created and sold their own version of Kachina dolls as authentic Hopi religious items. As in our artist example above, the primary consequence of this deceptive activity was that the market was flooded with these fraudulent and misrepresented goods that competed directly with goods made by citizens of Native Nations. This not only left consumers with counterfeit products, but products made by American Indians were being driven out of the market by these mass-produced and fake items. Furthermore, these fraudulent goods, overall, contribute to an identity construction (via these claims of “authenticity” or “traditionalism”) that is out of the hands of the American Indians they claim to represent.

For the EBCI in particular, the new heritage tourism development model (that will be discussed in detail in Chapter Seven) once again increased the demand for EBCI-made goods. One result of this increased popularity is the issue of copycat objects. The IACA offers some protections against this, but it does not offer any defense against two specific categories of copycat occurrences: (1) the copying and selling of art and crafts by non-Natives, but not labeling them as “American Indian-made” (e.g., fake religious items, bogus clan masks, etc.) thus relying on the general public’s lack of information about the IACA and (2) the copying of ideas and techniques within the American Indian (here, EBCI) artisan group. Before the influx of this newest cultural tourism period (which began circa mid-

1990's), these were not issues that arose specifically with EBCI's cultural assets because the boundedness of their practices from their customers (during the nostalgia days of tourism on the Qualla Boundary) meant that there was a lack of market and, thus, lack of motive for these activities. In other words, there was no monetary incentive to invent fake EBCI clan masks to sell and no monetary incentive to guard one's own artistic style and technique with specifically EBCI crafts because this was not what the majority of tourists who came to the Qualla Boundary customers wanted to buy at that time (although collectors, especially those of American Indian arts, have always been a part of the tourist market, the expense associated with collecting made them a small percentage of the total customer base). Most consumers wanted, instead, the nostalgia items that were easily recognized from pan-Indian images. But the new cultural tourism market today has brought the above issues into sharp focus for the Qualla Boundary.

In this vein, it is important to mention the less formal protections of intellectual property and business secrets when discussing arts and crafts produced by EBCI citizens and businesses on the Qualla Boundary. Some of the business owners whom I spoke with were extremely protective of their inventory; this outlook was clarified to me as I walked around the stores in Cherokee. In fact, one owner, who had already given me permission to take notes that day, stopped me while I was jotting some ideas down about two in-store customers from Germany who were looking over some herbal medicines. He asked to see if I was taking notes about the artists whose works he had, their prices, and/or which of their works he carried. After showing him my notes, which had no recordings of those items, he was satisfied that I was indeed an anthropologist and not sent from another store to steal their artists and/or products. This may be the first time in history that an anthropologist on a

reservation was considered the *least* suspicious activity to be occupied with. I stayed and spoke with him for the rest of the afternoon. This was not a solitary example as other business owners expressed similar concern that their products were being “stolen” or undercut by “spies” from other businesses. This was especially true of non-Cherokee American Indian arts and crafters which the business owners expended much time and energy finding.

Similarly, the artists whom I spoke with were unhappy because when they worked on creating a new product or style, it was copied by the other artists and they had little means of protecting their works. Said Alice (an EBCI citizen) during a post-Indianpreneurship Focus Group meeting, “Somebody will steal your idea and the next thing you know, it’s all over the place. I’ve had that happen. I made little bitty jewelry boxes. The next thing I know, I saw one. They bought one from me but they didn’t know how to do it. They didn’t know how it worked. They had to take the whole thing apart to figure out how it worked.” This could lead to concerns about passing on knowledge in general, but I found that most artists were, in fact, quite eager and willing to share their knowledge of the general construction of their particular art, be it carving or painting. Where the line was drawn, however, was at a particular style, product, or technique that they or their family used. These issues, and their solutions, are still unfolding as the EBCI continues to revitalize their image in the tourism industry.

Construction of Identity and Representation

The Lived Experience of Culture and Race

The term culture is so prevalent that it is, for the most part, taken for granted in our daily lives. It is found in everything from the name of our field (sociocultural anthropology) to the television programs we watch (e.g., “Culture Shock”—which also serves as a good

example of the concept of “Othering”). The definitions for what culture is seem boundless at times, yet it is something that every person, if asked, will define for you in terms of their own experiences of their own culture—or in the case of stereotypes, what they see as others’ culture. And here is where the true problem with “culture” lies. In the past, American Indian culture in academia, both as individual Native Nations and as a pan-Indian whole, has been primarily defined etically, that is, by researchers who are non-Natives. While this research has its merits, it is impossible for it alone to account for the multiple layers of definitions that are created within, and nuances that come from being an insider in that society (Smith 1999). This is not an American Indian problem alone, though. These nuances and subtleties of the multifaceted emic perspectives on what constitutes one’s own culture should be a part of any thorough research. The culture of “America” is very indicative of this. Asking one person in Vermont, another in Texas, and a third in the Appalachians to define their “American culture,” you will find distinct differences.

So we see that people have these emic/etic multifaceted constructions of culture that they seek to perpetuate in a lived and experiential way (e.g., for an EBCI business owner, as we have seen, this may manifest itself in the products they choose to sell). Not only do they seek to perpetuate their view, it is also acted *upon* them at every moment (e.g., via the brochures produced by the EBCI Chamber of Commerce that have photos and pictures describing what Cherokee is and who the EBCI are). Race, like culture, also exists in the minds of people today in a lived form experience. Academically we may argue about the concepts and realities of what “race” is or is not, but when you are darker-skinned in a world in which power is held by “white folks,” the realities of race as lived on a daily basis come into sharp focus. Since we are clearly not in a post-racial society, with racism still an

everyday battle, it is important not to minimize people's constructs of lived identity in this way. This discrimination continues to be felt by some EBCI citizens. One EBCI citizen, a tall and large man, barely 40 years old with a phenotypically American Indian look of darker skin and black hair, sporting several Cherokee tattoos told me about an incident that had happened to him only months before our talk. He had driven his son to the nearest skate park three hours away, so that his son could pursue his dream of being a professional skater (he said this with a chuckle, although quickly qualifying that his son was, in fact, very talented). While he waited in his truck to pick him up at the end of the day, a police car pulled up behind him. He was taken out of his truck and subjected to an illegal search by two white police officers. When I asked how he responded, he said that he was used to the treatment, which had been much worse when he was in Texas and had been pulled over multiple times by the same white police officer who was trying to catch illegal immigrants from Mexico. In addition, even public ads like this have also appeared in the One Feather: "Attn: Enrolled Members who live on the Reservation. Have you tried to purchase a vehicle from "Kings Auto Sales" in Hendersonville, NC? Did they tell you that they couldn't sell to you because you live on the Reservation? If so, please call . . ." (Anonymous2011a).

During my research I found that there exists some animosity towards what EBCI citizens often term "whites Indians," meaning EBCI citizens who are phenotypically white (see the earlier section on the history of the rolls, Chapter 3). There are many such citizens and even former Principal Chief Joyce Dugan, for instance, publically identified herself as a white Indian (half-white, half EBCI). These white Indians receive all of the benefits of citizenship in a Native Nation but do not experience the discrimination and prejudice based

on dark skin color that still plagues our society. I spoke with a number of dark-skinned EBCI citizens who resented white Indians for this reason.

For many American Indians, the most evident example of these lived realities, in terms of their culture, can be seen in the U.S. policies that attempted to eradicate native language usage by American Indians through, amongst other means, physical force and indoctrination methods. Assimilation policies were used precisely because it was believed that they could break the political unity that certain aspects of a culture, such as the use of language, offers. In terms of language use in practice today, few of the EBCI members who claim the language is a key part of their culture can actually speak it fluently, but there are also EBCI citizens who would claim that when the language is gone, so is their culture. It is precisely *because of*, not in spite of, these lived realities—inconsistencies and all—that the concept of culture is important to address.

Problems of Tradition

Following closely on the heels of the discussion of the problem with “culture” as a concept is that of “tradition.” The two share many of the same problems in that they involve highly divergent emic and etic definitions (including internal divergence in each category), high malleability, and are contested and emergent. The primary issue with the use of the term “traditional,” though, is that every tradition has to have a beginning, so when does an activity (or product) move from the category of “new” to the category of “traditional”? One year, five years, 100 years?

One aspect of this issue that has been discussed casually (I especially saw this within the language revitalization movements) in regards to cultural revitalization efforts is the problem of the youth and their use of contemporary technology that always seems to be

pitted against “the traditional In this ongoing struggle between the contemporary and the traditional, it has been put forth in various conferences and between elders over lunch tables that the current push for traditional activities and cultural revitalization efforts may actually be doing more harm than good in the long-term maintenance of said traditional activities. In the case of cell phones, language teachers were very concerned because young people relied so heavily on them for communication, yet, there was no way for them to communicate in this manner while using the Cherokee language. Since then, Apple’s integration of Cherokee Language Unicode into the iPhone and syllabary for computer keyboards has mitigated these worries, but, unfortunately, there are not many other Native Nations who have this accessible in their language yet. Culture has always been malleable by nature, adjusting and being adjusted by people and their current needs and supplies. The idea of cultural “revitalization,” however, stops cultural production in its tracks. It reifies culture itself into objects and methods.

One example of a (non-Native specific) activity that has survived its original purpose and has moved on to become relevant in a new way is knitting—a topic I, as a then non-knitter, completed an ethnography on for one of my graduate courses. What began as an ubiquitous historical necessity for warmth and clothing lay dormant after our grandmother’s and mother’s generation (Macdonald 1988). Recently, however, the resurgence of this “traditional” activity has skyrocketed as groups of young women and men take the act of knitting and make it relevant to their lives today. This is seen not only in what they knit, but more importantly in why they knit. They are knitting iPhone cozies, laptop covers, and FAA safe travel bags. It was expressed to me through interviews with “Stitch and Bitchers” (groups that meet regularly to knit together, generally in a public area) and individuals, that

what makes this, for all intents and purposes, functionally unnecessary activity today truly relevant is that these young knitters have found that they can express themselves in a truly unique way through knitting. This expression of self can be expressed in ways only accessible by a few methods, such as sewing, that can be worn and used in public. This self-expression combined with utility—i.e., relevance—is the essence of what people deem as their cultural persona or representation.

This embodies the problems of “tradition” for me. Tradition implies a stagnant activity when, in fact, no activity is truly stagnant. To imply that traditional Cherokee finger-weaving must only be for belts and garb or that traditional patterns must only be used for river cane baskets robs them of the relevance that they can and should be experiencing today. This does not mean that the traditional belts or designs would disappear any more than the cabled wool sweater disappeared when the knitting resurgence began (it is still, in fact, very popular). The weakening of the traditional does not come by way of the modern—it comes from disuse.

Economic

Introduction to Current Economic Standing of the EBCI

Many studies regarding the “Indian problem” have been carried out over the years, from the Peace Committee of 1867 to the Meriam report of 1928 and to scores more discharged in the 1960s and onward. All of them have had grim findings to report in regards to the economic status of American Indians. In addition, they all have had suggestions about how to best solve the “Indian problem.” Some have been useful as first steps, such as the acknowledgment of sovereignty as it relates to economic standing, but most have had little, if any real impact. Many attempts have also been made to help individual tribes by bringing in

consultants and experts for evaluation and guidance for economic development.

Unfortunately, these attempts have also had few lasting positive effects. Where all of these efforts have failed is in acknowledging that Native Nations' economies do not have the same economic foundation that most strategies are based on because they are not grounded in the standard European ideologies.

So we see that one of the problems in these many early reports was that they blindly suggested solutions without properly analyzing their premise. When I began developing my research questions, then, I had to sit down and seriously think about the argument that I was proposing, but I had to think about it in a new way that would ensure that I was not, blindly, only looking for evidence that would support it. In this way, I had to address the possibility that small businesses may *not* have a large impact on the Qualla Boundary. If the positive correlation that I theorized was not seen, the research questions then must have addressed a different set of questions entirely, such as: on a reservation with a strong small business presence, what would the lack of small business impact tell us about conceptions of small businesses and entrepreneurship on the Qualla Boundary and possibly on other reservations; would a lack of small business impact indicate that a large enterprise can indeed fulfill both the economic and cultural revitalization needs (per EBCI "cultural revitalization" programs) of a Native Nation and through what programs would this be accomplished? In order to evaluate this possibility, I had to take a close look at the EBCI's new casino and what the EBCI has consequently been able to accomplish outside of the realm of small businesses.

The Casino: Introduction

I mean granted [the EBCI government is] doing better now [since the opening of the casino], but the levy from the businesses supported them for fifty years. Now they act like that the levy is just peanuts. [Abe, small business owner]

The EBCI first had a bingo hall (which is still functioning and stands on the lesser-used road leading out of town and into the mountains) and then a small casino before launching the large Harrah's Cherokee Casino and Hotel in 1997. The year 2011 was significant for the casino, though, as the new third tower opened, bringing the hotel room count to 1,108. This construction was the largest hospitality expansion in the Southeast and the sixth largest construction project in the entire U.S. (McKie 2011j). This is the also just the first phase of the Harrah's Cherokee Casino & Hotel's five-year, \$650 million expansion (ICTMN Staff 2012). New signature restaurants launched, including one in the Paula Dean line. The EBCI renewed their contract with Harrah's as a management company for another seven years, thus continuing until at least 2018. Per this agreement, Harrah's purchased a \$1.2 million MRI machine for the Cherokee Indian Hospital and will provide for its maintenance funds—a total of just over \$2 million. Most significantly, the state of North Carolina and the EBCI came to an agreement on a new 30-year gaming compact that allows Harrah's Cherokee Casino & Hotel to provide live table games and grants the EBCI sole rights to provide those games west of I-26 (McKie 2011p). The Tribe agreed to give North Carolina a percentage of gross receipts from the table games that will increase incrementally as such: 4 percent for the first five years, 5 percent for the next five years, 6 percent for the next five years, 7 percent for the next five years, 8 percent for the next ten years. The state has agreed to use all of the monies received from the EBCI to help fund the state's public schools.

In July 2011, UNC's Kenan-Flagler Business School issue a report entitled "Assessing the Economic and Non-Economic Impacts of Harrah's Cherokee Casino, North Carolina" stating that the casino adds \$380 million in the surrounding area annually.

According to the study, the amount of total visitors to the casino increased from 3.1 million in 1998 to 3.6 million in 2010 and visitor-generated revenue totaled \$386 million in 2010. It also reported that the casino is responsible for five percent of employment (1,674 employees as of 2009) in Jackson and Swain counties and accounts for eight percent of wages and salaries (McKie 2011i). Additionally, in 2009 an estimated \$52.4 million wage and salary income was fed into the local economy with household spending generating an additional \$8.3 million in economic output for a total employee compensation impact of \$60.7 million in Jackson and Swain Counties (McKie 2011i; Johnson Jr., Kasarda, and Appold 2011).

In the realm of newly-implemented tribal income sources, gaming, although very successful for some Native Nations as can be seen in the case of the EBCI, is a precarious business. If a Native Nation succeeds in its gaming enterprise (which is not always a given result) one of two pitfalls can arise: (1) in a state in which gaming is illegal, the state can respond by challenging the Native Nations sovereignty in court in an attempt to oppose the casino (Mazzetti 2011) or (2) in a state that supports gaming (e.g., in the case of Michigan, to be discussed below), the state and/or other Native Nations within that state will see how well the tribal venture is going and start their own gaming ventures, thus reducing profits for all ventures⁷². This second pitfall is even more detrimental to Native Nations whose casinos are far off the beaten path—as most reservations are. Therefore, one of the primary ways a Native Nation can protect itself from these hazards in the long run is to come up with alternative uses for their gaming profits, after investing the funds directly into the tribal infrastructure, in order to diversify their income sources. One of the easiest ways to do this is

⁷² A newer challenge cropped up this year as states are now allowed, as of a Department of Justice ruling in December, 2011, to regulate online gaming operations in an attempt to generate revenue for the state (Webster 2012).

through the encouragement of small business activity. It diversifies the tribal economy in many directions, it provides money that circulates within the community, and it is sustainable over years of growth and recession. Since small businesses are also not managed by the Native Nation, they also divest the workload away from the Native Nation and produce a long, stable growth path for the overall economy with little effort on the part of that Native Nation.

But how did the EBCI get to the point in which they owned a large and successful casino? The EBCI's economic history provides many examples of this on their path to the ultimate goal of economic sustainability and self-sufficiency. Early in their business attempts, beginning in the late 1800s with their incorporation as a Sugar & Silk company followed later by a lumber business, they discovered what The Harvard Project was to publish about in the 1990s—that business and politics did not mix. Out of the initial “bickering” (Finger 1984) came The Cherokee Boys Farm Club, founded in 1932, which provided many services for EBCI citizens such as vocational education and shelters. The Boys Club started a trash removal service in 1964 order to provide the community with a tribally-owned source income and jobs. This service expanded to other communities on the western side of the state and was soon the most profitable venture of the tribe at that time and is now non-profit self-supporting, Tribal Enterprise. These successful enterprises gave the EBCI the experience and capital to then begin a new endeavor.

In 1982 the Eastern Band started their modest gaming venture with the two elements for success deemed necessary by American Indian economic development research in hand (Smith 2000): a stable governmental system and a friendly relationship with the state of North Carolina. This initial venture, tribal bingo followed later by a small casino, was a

rousing success. This success grew and then culminated in the construction of a Harrah's managed casino in 1997. But with this came the rush of problems that face every Native Nation with a successful gaming operation. For example, what to do with the profits, how to combat the new environmental problems posed, and how to protect the tribe if the venture is ultimately unsuccessful? In other words, how might the Native Nation shape a sustainable community in light of this new venture? In 2000, the Cherokee Preservation Foundation (see Appendix A) was established to address many of these questions with a special emphasis on youth consciousness development. Today, many of the cultural revitalization, economic development, and environmental projects occurring on the Qualla Boundary are funded to differing extents through the CPF (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians 2005). Although the CPF is generally seen as a positive branch of the financial casino arm, some EBCI citizens are resentful of its existence as its creation was dictated by the state (thus implying that the state believed the EBCI incapable of managing their own money in a responsible manner). As Mary Wachcha says in the One Feather, "We were held hostage once before by a previous governor who demanded that 5 million dollars be set aside for cultural and economic preservation and the result of that was the Preservation Foundation" (Wachacha 2011).

Another protection that the Eastern Band has put in place is a debt fund. This fund is set aside solely for the purpose of paying off tribal debt if they find themselves in financial trouble. They have also diversified their sources of income for the tribe. The Eastern Band is using gaming funds to branch into business ventures that include fishing camps, tours, culturally-centered tourist attractions, and even a bottled water plant. Linked with community sustainability is the problem of education and brain drain discussed previously. This is being

addressed on many fronts by the EBCI. The children receive leadership training in school for management positions. The Tribal Internship Training Program provides students with internship positions within the tribe and preferential hiring for their return after college. There are also grants to train students in technology information that will be needed for the new BalsamWest FiberNet company. Currently, they can stay on the reservation to get an Associate's degree, but in the future the tribe will have its own fully-accredited college to further the educational process. The results of these programs are just beginning to emerge. Teresa from Granny's commented that, "A [problem] we used to have was that all of the kids who could bring something viable to the tribe used to get out of town. Now, we are at least managing to keep some of them anyway."

One of the most impressive steps taken in the pursuit of self-sufficiency for the EBCI was the start of this fiber optic company, the BalsamWest FiberNet company. As I briefly mentioned in Chapter Five ("Land"), being far away from what all other phone companies considered a viable location, the EBCI and its citizens were left out of any new communication technology opportunities. This meant that the whole community, as well as most of Western North Carolina and surrounding counties, was behind in their ability to provide services for their communities and businesses (education, health services, governmental services, etc.). Furthermore, a study conducted at Southwestern Community College (SCC) called Appalachian Access, focused on these issues and their stifling impact on the area. This spurred Dr. Cecil Groves of SCC to encourage collaboration between EBCI and Drake Enterprises to form what would become BalsamWest. The EBCI jointly started this fiber optic communication company in 2003 with \$12 million of their own funds. They then laid 300 miles of underground fiber in ten counties in North Carolina, Georgia, and

Tennessee⁷³ (Hubbs 2010). The switch was flipped, so to speak, in 2006, and was so successful that MCI has signed an agreement to connect with them too. This network, although still growing, has provided much-needed internet access for schools, hospitals, and the community as well as some of their businesses (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians 2008b).

The EBCI has also diverted many resources into, “preservation, research, restoration, and/or development of the history, tradition, culture, language, arts, crafts, heritage and overall well-being of the Cherokee people” (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians 2005). To regain lost crafting methods they worked with archaeologists, such as Dr. Brett Riggs, to work with local artists, in this case potters, to research techniques and methods that became unused (for many reasons ranging from environment changes to assimilation policies) through programs such as the *Cherokee Pottery Revitalization Project* (Lefler 2009:58; Riggs). In addition, there is also the Revitalization of Traditional Cherokee Artisan Resources (RTCAR) initiative. Due to land development many of the original supplies used in making baskets (such as river cane) and other crafts are becoming less abundant. This initiative was set in place to ensure the survival of these supplies as well as the survival of the methods themselves. The program will eventually expand to also cover edible and medicinal plant resources. Since 2004, the EBCI has also operated a total immersion Cherokee language school system for their children and simultaneously provides language classes for

⁷³ Their mission statement is “to provide open and direct access to advanced telecommunications infrastructure in Western North Carolina, North Georgia and Eastern Tennessee at prices and quality levels enjoyed in major metropolitan areas of the U.S.” (McKie 2011a). Today it is worth around \$40 million and the EBCI has around \$7 million invested in it.

those children's parents⁷⁴. Environmentally, the CPF performs impact studies on potential environmental damage caused by increasing traffic and large localized growth. The EBCI (sponsored by the Cherokee Cooperative Extension Service and CPF) also send about fourteen EBCI high school seniors each year to Costa Rica (begun in 2005) for eco-tours. This tour gives lessons and practical experiences on the importance of environmental protection especially in a tourist-heavy economy at EARTH University. The students also meet with other indigenous groups in Costa Rica to share information about their management of these issues.

The Casino: Benefits and Hindrances

The subject of casinos on reservations, both their benefits and hindrances, has begun to be examined in other literature, so I will review a few of these key points here. First and foremost is the immense threat of economic collapse if the casino fails at some point. Previous to my migration for graduate work to the balmy climes of North Carolina, I lived in Michigan. My house was on the outskirts of Detroit for a time and, from that location, it was about a two and a half hours to the Soaring Eagle Casino. The successful casino is owned by the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe (SCIT) and was a destination for busloads of gaming enthusiasts because the state of Michigan itself did not permit casinos, leaving the SCIT's enterprises as the only option—and a popular one at that. In 1996, the statewide ballot cleared the way for gaming in the state of Michigan, with Detroit securing three spots. The SCIT were able to secure one of these slots. Although projecting one specific set of circumstances onto a different set can be problematic, I think it is important to be very clear on the ramifications of being a casino-owning Native Nation in an otherwise non-gaming

⁷⁴ This is the Kituwah Preservation and Education Program and Academy.

state. If the SCIT had not secured that slot, they surely would have suffered great losses. The population of the Detroit Metro area, not to mention the surrounding states, would have had easy access to *three* local casinos (not to mention another, literally, just across the bridge in Windsor, Ontario) instead of having to drive hours for just one⁷⁵. This concern is echoed in Cherokee:

Says Juanita Plummer Wilson while running for Principal Chief in 2011, “It’s a dangerous trend that we’re seeing. Tennessee is looking at getting its own casino going. What happens when that happens?” [McKie 2011q]

Gary Ledford states, “At very great financial risk, we’ve put all of our eggs into one flimsy non-double-weave basket. . . . We have effectively turned our back on the small businessman by focusing all efforts on the casino, in a declining casino market.” [ICTMN Staff 2012]

And, finally, Mary Wachacha warns, “Let’s not get caught-up in the state dangling a carrot before us by the state saying we can have a casino anywhere-they are also saying that anyone-not just the Tribe-can have a casino anywhere. These casino companies such as Caesars, MGM Grand and others have a lot more money than this Tribe to build new casinos. If gaming is allowed state-wide, these companies are going to be first in line to build new casinos in the state. The tribe will have to go further into debt to build another casino.” [Wachacha 2011]

This is precisely the issue that is most discussed when Native Nations are deciding whether to begin a gambling enterprise. Gaming money is fickle by nature: if you are successful, the state may open gaming up in times of financial crisis (as the state of North Carolina is facing today); if you are *not* successful, then you will initially be heavily in debt with reduced legal sovereignty to boot (as has been discussed in Chapter Six). It is hard to argue that relying on one gaming enterprise does not compromise an economy’s adaptability and, thus, stability.

The EBCI, having seen other Native Nations choose this path, have tried to mitigate some of these problems through their 50/50 system, diversifying income streams (e.g., BalsamWest

⁷⁵ Although extensive studies have not been undertaken with Native Nation casinos, other casino studies have shown that market saturation, e.g., Atlantic City, is a problem in which, “competitive pressures are beginning to reduce the stimulative effects of established casino district” (Rephann et al. 1997).

Fiber Optic Network, Cherokee Bottled Water, etc.), and continual upgrades to the casino itself (another tower, concert venue, Asian gaming room, etc.). Although it would be impossible to predict the extent of the long-term success of their casino, in Susan Jenkins (non-EBCI citizen) words, “. . . if that casino blew up tomorrow, they would have some skills they didn’t have several years ago.”

Since the casino is a relatively new endeavor for the EBCI, they are still developing ways to diversify their income streams. As the EBCI citizens keenly felt during the recession, this is the biggest challenge they will face. The students who were set to draw their funds at age 18 that year (2009), much like most retirees across the U.S. during the recession, found that they were down thousands of dollars from what their classmates were slated to earn in the preceding and following years. The investment choices made for the Minors Fund was both a blessing when they were earning interest and a curse during the recession. The casino attendance also fell off during this time, exacerbating the problem by reducing the profits being placed into the fund.

But this is exactly where the small businesses shine. In stark contrast to running a large enterprise, a small business (in inventory, hours, etc.) is more nimble and more able to adapt. Taken as a whole, their collective diversity provides a relatively stable base for an economy even through a recession. In fact, the number of small businesses increases during a recession, as my own research supports⁷⁶ (Arriola 2009). A small business can change

⁷⁶ As stated in my introduction, the increase that was reported to me from the Office of Budget & Finance's Revenue Office was a near doubling of licenses. In 2008 there were 329 on site businesses on the Qualla Boundary and 161 home-based & off -Qualla Boundary vendors. This total increased to about 600 for 2009. It must be noted that the casino was also beginning the next stage of renovation that year and, therefore, some of those new applications were for construction companies. However, these companies may also be owned by EBCI citizens and are certainly employing EBCI citizens for this work, so although these businesses may or may not be permanent fixtures on the Qualla Boundary, they are certainly having a direct economic impact on the Boundary.

inventory, scale back on hours, or even relocate if needed, while the casino is locked into position, events, and offerings (in terms of dining, shops, etc.), sometimes years in advance. And, by its collective nature, there is no singular competition to all small businesses, so, unlike another casino being developed nearby, the threat of direct competition shutting down that segment of the economy is nearly nonexistent.

Or is it? Although it is true that there is no one behemoth business that can encapsulate all small businesses from restaurants to fishing stores to consulting firms, there are large enterprises which are a threat to entire subsectors of small businesses—and two of them were nearly on the Qualla Boundary. The first, as fitting for this section, was the casino itself. In a direct way, the casino brought more people to Cherokee, but it also corralled the visitors into its space, thereby, for all intents and purposes, discouraging the visitors from experiencing the rest of Cherokee. It was also direct competition to the numerous hotels and motels that had been running in Cherokee for decades. So, what was the effect of this tribal business on small businesses on the Qualla Boundary? As the EBCI's gaming industry grew, unfortunately the small and medium size tribal businesses started to suffer from lack of customer traffic.

The EBCI government responded to these issues on several fronts. The Tribal Gaming Commission began by establishing an overflow policy with some of the local and independent hotels and motels. This provides them with a steady income and provides the casino hotel with alternative amenities for its guests, even in their busiest season. Not everyone was able to benefit from this, though, as the accommodations had to be on par with what the casino could offer (internet, etc.), but this alleviated some of the competition (Harding 2010). In 2000, the Cherokee Transit Service (initially a medical appointment

transport service) also began making structural changes by implementing a transit route from the casino to parts of downtown Cherokee (and even through to Gatlinburg), thus giving visitors, who cannot walk from the casino to the downtown area as of yet, a direct, convenient, and free way to get to the shopping and cultural districts (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians 2011). Even the physical updating of the store fronts that is currently taking place has its origins in the casino, as the updates will provide a cohesive, updated, “Cherokee” look, based on the casino’s “Cherokee” image, throughout Cherokee tourist areas, drawing people to them (I chronicle these particular efforts in Chapter Seven where I cover the tourism history in Cherokee including physical changes required by tribe).

The second potential threat to small businesses was the near-installation of a Super Wal-mart just off of the main highway in Cherokee; a threat now defunct after a last minute withdrawal by the Wal-mart corporation.

There is no doubt that the casino and its revenue help the small businesses on the Qualla Boundary through indirect monetary support and an increased consumer base. But it has furthermore helped by increasing the knowledge base on running a business on a larger scale (as seen in Susan’s aforementioned quote) and has increased the number of students going into business majors and bringing that knowledge back to the Qualla Boundary now that there are potential jobs waiting for them. At home, the EBCI provides jobs through its many business ventures, each of which has training programs designed to increase the promotion rate of members into the upper levels of management, thus increasing the amount of business knowledge via direct training.

Even though the casino has clearly contributed to small business development on the Qualla Boundary in some ways, small businesses play a vital role in the success of the

casino. Small businesses do for the casino what they do best in general: offer diversity. The casino may bring in 3.6 million tourists per year, but it can only offer a limited amount of entertainment, shopping, and dining. The value of this cannot be underestimated in a rural area that offers little in the way of any of these elements nearby. The small businesses on the Qualla Boundary undoubtedly increase the amount of people willing to visit the casino precisely because they can offer family or friends the opportunity to not be confined to the casino. Friends and family who might not have otherwise gone on a vacation to a casino are willing to come to Cherokee precisely because its small businesses can offer entertainment like guided fishing trips, chances to meet EBCI artists, and eat less expensive meals made from local ingredients.

The Impact of Per Cap

One of the most widely discussed benefits of the casino are the “per cap” payouts made to EBCI citizens. In launching into this section, which presents a controversial and much discussed subject, I want begin by emphasizing again that “per cap” payments are akin to corporate dividends. In this case, the shareholders of the corporation are EBCI citizens who are equally-invested owners of the casino. This means that each citizen (hence the “per cap” or per capita) gets an equal amount of dividends paid out in the form of checks twice yearly. This payment for the EBCI citizens has varied widely over the past decade from the casino opening to the peak of the economy and then followed by the Great Recession of the Bush era. This dividend payout is calculated by splitting the profits 50/50, i.e., 50% of proceeds are split amongst the citizens and 50% is reinvested into the nation (Ha and Ullmer 2007). The payments total approximately \$3,000 twice a year at this time (Ha and Ullmer 2007; Lambert 2011a).

Having previously discussed the racist finger-pointing that makes it okay for a non-Native, but not an American Indian, to earn dividends, let me now tackle the question of what exactly is the difference between a dividend, as paid out by a non-Native Nation corporation, and one such as the EBCI's casino. The most notable difference is that, because the investors are *all* of the citizens of the EBCI Nation, children accrue this money from birth and receive a lump sum on their eighteenth birthday⁷⁷. Releasing a five figure lump sum to an eighteen year old (obviously, this has varied widely, but is currently at approximately \$67,000 per minor (McKie 2011k)) is a risky venture due to the general lack of serious financial responsibility up to that point in their lives. In the past, it has been common for teenagers to buy cars with the money, depleting the entire account in one fell swoop. There can also be family pressure to distribute this lump sum. One business owner related the story of his high school employee who confided that she wanted to refuse the lump sum entirely because her family was already fighting over how it would be distributed amongst themselves.

The EBCI have tackled this potential problem by implementing several programs to see which one has the greatest impact. These include the Qualla Financial Freedom finance management programs beginning with elementary school aged-children (Cherokee Preservation Foundation 2012) on money management as well as interactive programs for high school students in which various financial scenarios are presented that they must figure out how to manage within their budget. The latest program has been deemed so important that they are now required per Tribal Council, Ordinance No. 401 (effective April 1, 2011), which states: “Any minor member, applying for their minors trust fund, will be required to

⁷⁷ As of 01-31-11, this Minor's Fund had 4,891 participants with each fund being worth an average of \$67,416.47 (McKie 2011k).

complete the online Manage Your EBCI Money Course (www.manageyourebcimoney.org) and include his/her Certificate of Completion to be entitled to receive any monies” (Spruce 2011). The effectiveness of these new programs to generate adults who know how to better manage their money to finance a lifetime of income, if they so choose, should be apparent in the coming years. The program claims that, “You can be a millionaire before the age of 40 if you start investing your money when you’re young” (Spruce 2011)⁷⁸.

Opting-Out

Another example of how this system is not a capitalist enterprise per se can be seen in the “opt outs.” The EBCI Nation voted to collectively invest and collectively distribute dividends based on a majority approval. Not all EBCI citizens approved of the casino or the per cap payments. Some EBCI citizens refuse to accept payments and “opt out” of their checks (as it is described locally) for a variety of reasons. In 2010, while I was in the field, the casino launched the sale of alcohol. This was no simple task as the Qualla Boundary is completely dry. This decision, which was voted on by the EBCI citizens, angered many, including small business restaurant owners who were still unable to sell alcohol and were thus put at a disadvantage compared to the casino restaurants which could serve wine, beer, and eventually liquor⁷⁹. Many other citizens objected to this on moral grounds, citing

⁷⁸ Although I focus on children and young adults here, EBCI adults are offered one-on-one counseling and can take finance workshops free of charge (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians 2005:20). This program went on to win a national award in 2011 from the Native American Finance Officers Association (NAFOA).

⁷⁹ The EBCI passage of the liquor allowance for the casino created many legal issues between the state of North Carolina and the EBCI over how and where the EBCI was allowed to purchase the alcohol (which is heavily regulated in NC). Eventually, nearly two years later an agreement was hammered out allowing the EBCI to buy wholesale from the state (Blankenship 2011).

problems with alcohol abuse and the perceptions of American Indians and alcohol abuse⁸⁰.

Although the number of opt-outs is small, it is still important to recognize these individuals' choices and how they choose to exercise their agency in this situation.

Summary

This chapter merely scratches the surface of the numerous complexities of Native Nation citizenship, land, and representational boundaries. Small business owners who choose to locate on a reservation not only have to learn how to negotiate the complicated field of small business ownership, but they also have to learn and negotiate the specific obstacles and advantages that these Native Nations' boundaries present.

Historically, the EBCI have had to reaffirm, and persistently pursue the affirmation of, their own boundaries. Examples include the decade-long battles for their North Carolina citizenship, inventive methods for retaining their land during federal attempts at relocation, and the EBCI's approach to their own cultural representation. Today, the EBCI continues to exercise their right to transform these boundaries. They have revised their citizenship criteria and, more recently, have audited their roles. They also are purchasing neighboring lands in order to buy back sacred grounds (Duncan 2010) as well as acquiring land for economic development (Otwell 2010).

⁸⁰ Revelations and alcohol: I followed the dialogues and rhetoric leading up to the decision to allow alcohol throughout my time in Cherokee and was keenly interested in the religious aspect of these discussions. Billboards were posted, letters were written, and articles were published in the One Feather newspaper. One morning, while reading the newspaper outside on the new Riverwalk on a particularly sunny day, it was revealed through a letter written to the newspaper that almost all of the religious rhetoric was being generated by a church from Asheville. Although many EBCI citizens are Christian, as was this church, and many were against alcohol on the Qualla Boundary based on this, the idea that an outsider would pass judgment and try to dictate their decisions was blatantly offensive as Jean C. Holt describes here: "This week, many of us received a pamphlet from Asheville in opposition of the alcohol referendum we will be voting on next week. Once again, people off the Qualla Boundary are telling us we do not have enough intelligence or reasoning to make our own decisions.... I thought we had moved past the old caricature portrayed in movies and cartoons of the 'savage drunk Indian on firewater,'" (Holt 2009).

These transformations, in addition to the changes taking place in the EBCI economic base (e.g., the casino), tourists' interests, and the EBCI's own revised focus on cultural revitalization all have profound impacts on small businesses on the Qualla Boundary. Small businesses must take all of these aspects into consideration when deciding whether or not to locate on the Qualla Boundary. As the EBCI attempt to encourage small business growth on the Qualla Boundary, they, too, must (and do) address these considerations. But, because of their inherent sovereignty, they have the authority to mitigate the disadvantages, offer incentives, and bolster the benefits of locating on the Qualla Boundary in order to encourage this growth. What are the results for small businesses that come from this ability of the EBCI to negotiate boundaries and exercise their sovereign rights? In the years from 2008 to present, as mentioned earlier, there has been a tripling of students enrolled in EBCI Indianpreneurship courses as well as a doubling of vendors and contractor businesses during that same time (Walker 2010).

CHAPTER 6

IMPACTS AND INFLUENCE: SOVEREIGNTY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Unlike many people, funeral homes have never felt morbid to me. My grandfather worked in one as an usher after his retirement and would show me around the building and even the casket showcase room filled with chrome and satin. I have fond memories of that time with him. So when I read in the One Feather that Cherokee had its first and only funeral home open to serve the community in July of 2009, I knew I wanted to sit and talk with them about they decided to start this niche business (See figures 6.1 and 6.2).



Figure 6.1: Longhouse funeral home.



Figure 6.2: Longhouse funeral home.

The Longhouse Funeral Home is located next to the Santa's Land theme park on the way out of town through the mountains in a nondescript white building marked with only a small sign framed in wood by the road: Long House Funeral Home, Inc., 828-497-1408, Est. 2009, Native American owned & operated. I entered the building and was greeted warmly by Bruce Martin Sr., a soft-spoken man with a wealth of business experience, and his wife Nancy, a youthful-looking woman who has no issues speaking plainly about her own ventures. And at their side was their grandson, an adorable, always smiling baby who bounced on a door swing happily while waiting for his dad (Bruce Martin Jr.) to come back from a meeting. The funeral home is proud of its identity as a citizen-owned business offering services especially geared towards other Cherokee people, calling themselves the "First Funeral Home of the First People" and stating that they are, "pleased to now be able to care for our own in our own community." This is important because in a region which is heavily Christian (some surrounding counties at the 90th percentile of the population (Association of Religion Data Archives. 2000)), finding a place that will respectfully attend to the needs of non-Christian family, such as some EBCI citizens, may be difficult. To this end, the Long House websites assure that, "We understand our unique culture and traditions and can tailor

the service to the needs of the surviving family members. . . We are very sensitive to the impact that discrimination can have and we will not tolerate any practices that might be offensive to any individual or group.”

The building that houses the funeral home has one main corridor (it is, quite literally, a long house) with rooms to the sides which included a service room, sitting room, and the workshop. This workshop houses the project that inspired the funeral home, which is Nancy’s brainchild: Native Clans and Caskets. These simply beautiful caskets are hand-carved wood (they were originally carved by a local artist who had to move and are now made by a mother-and-son team in Georgia) that Nancy sews the linings for and finishes. In order to protect her investment, Nancy single-handedly procured a patent for the designs of her Native caskets, but, unfortunately, does not have the capital to pursue the patent infringements that have occurred.

We talked in the sitting room that was filled with comfy couches and chairs, wooded tables, a bright window at the front, and a large stone fireplace on the side. I soon learned that the Martins have three businesses in total—the funeral home, caskets, and a security company that they have had for 18 years. The security company provides the guard service and armored van for, primarily, the casino—and a wealth of red tape that the Martins must untangle every day. From 8(a) certification, Quality Security certification, HubZone certification (North Carolina HubZone and also the SBA HubZone), to knowing what the latest Refresh is on Schedule 84, they must be able to work autonomously and proactively to keep their business legally viable for this contract work. Payment is also something that must constantly be pursued as security contracts are left unpaid by the federal and state government for two or more years and funeral payments (from families struck unexpectedly

by the passing of a loved one) languish for months on end. As Nancy explains here, sometimes keeping a stable financial position can seem overwhelming:

Now, this is a fact. When we had 35 employees, because we were doing government contracts—and if you've ever seen one of those contracts come out, there's a big attachment from Department of Labor with it. It specifies in there how much you must pay for a certain job classification. If you're a small business and you don't have health insurance for your employees, then there's an additional thing called Health and Welfare Benefit. Now, it's like \$3.39 an hour or something like that, in addition to that pay that you have to pay them. Now, if you have any health insurance, you can forget the \$3.39. You don't have to give them that. Well, we thought, we've got 35 people. Maybe that's enough, now, we could get Blue Cross/Blue Shield to take a look at us and see." They said, 'Oh, sure. Send us the names and ages of your employees and we'll get a quote back to you.' They called back and they said \$28,000 a month would be what we would have to pay. [emphasis added]

The battles that the Martins and other business owners face every day may seem distant from our discussions of sovereignty and economic development, but they show us that there are real consequences for the ability to protect your business (intellectual property rights, Native Nation rights, etc.) when you are struggling just to keep yourself economically stable. Luckily for their customers, the Martins have managed to keep their businesses viable, overcoming red tape and other issues, and continue to offer their much needed and appreciated services, which would be non-existent without them, to the local community (See figure 6.3).



Figure 6.3: Nancy and Bruce Martin.

Sovereignty

Commentary by Mary Wachacha:

I have just read the front page of the Asheville Citizen-Times, “NC eyes stake in Harrah’s money.” I cannot believe that the State might agree to live dealers and other games at the Casino but would agree only if we give the State a share of the Tribe’s profits from the Casino.

This Tribe needs to play some hard ball politics. After all, we are one of the largest employers in the state-apparently, it isn’t enough that we provide a salary and benefits for casino employees; we are now expected to support the state of NC? What state benefits can Tribal members expect from this forced penalty? Perhaps we should only provide a salary and no health benefits to non-Cherokee employees so that we can cut some of our costs. After all, it is the non-Indian employee who gets the greater gain in health coverage- it certainly is not the Indian.

Apparently the state of NC cannot stand the thought of the Cherokees moving towards self-determination. . . I hope that by now, the Chief [during his negotiations with the state regarding live table gaming] will emphasize that the state of NC has done very little in the past 200 years for Cherokee Indians to warrant a share of our profits. . . The initial question the Chief needs to answer is: *Are we sovereign or not?*” [Wachacha 2011; emphasis added]

Experts help in discussions on Constitution: “Who’s the self in self-government? Who is the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians? What does that mean? What are you all about?” [Manley A. Begay, Jr., Navajo, faculty chair at the Native Nations Institute at the University of Arizona as cited in McKie 2011g]

“Do you have a passport?” This was not a question that visitors entering the Qualla Boundary from the GSMNP were expecting—or even understood. The new campaign in 2010, sponsored by EBCI Travel & Promotion, was carried out by the Warriors of Anikituhwa, a fierce-looking group of men dressed as Cherokee warriors from 1762 (Museum of the Cherokee Indian 2012) complete with loincloths, feathers, and red and black paint covering their bodies. The “passport” contained coupons for the various businesses and events going on in Cherokee, but as Sonny Leford explains, the underlying message is more serious:

What we’ve done today is promotional for the Cherokee people here on our Boundary. We volunteered to do this to help the tourism that comes into our Boundary. They actually get to see what real Cherokee warriors look like. Also, when we do these things for our people, our schools, things like this, it’s made a big impact on the Tsalagi people by teaching and educating about our culture, our past, the history, and *the truth*. A lot of times the truth isn’t spoken. . . . From us here as the Warriors of Anikituwah, we hope that tourism keeps coming and that we keep educating more of the public. [McKie 2010a]

The “truth” that Sonny speaks of here is the not-so-subtle message that the Qualla Boundary is another country. This was also not-so-subtly asserted in the billboards surrounding the Qualla Boundary that state “Another Country,” also accompanied by a picture of a Warrior of Anikituhwa. As this vignette and these ads reveal, the assertion of sovereignty by Native Nations needs to be made clear on many fronts, not just in the courthouses or United Nations meetings, but also in the minds of the average non-Native (see figure 6.4).



Figure 6.4: Billboard found on and off of the Qualla Boundary.

In 1916 Woodrow Wilson asked, “Just what is it that America stands for? If she stands for one thing more than another it is for the sovereignty of self-governing people.” No one has felt the sentiment of this statement more keenly than the Native Nations in the U.S.⁸¹ For over 200 years most have lived on reservations and have repeatedly battled to regain and retain their sovereignty. Through five eras and 500 years of lawmaking, they have seen their rights bounced back and forth in the U.S. courts of law between policies of sovereignty and those of assimilation and termination. During this time they have seen their commons broken and their economic bases devastated. As Native Nations emerge from the last two centuries in particular, they enter a period of renewal in which some of their inherent rights are being legally acknowledged by the federal government of the U.S. and some compensation is being given for the accompanying seizures of native lands. This is a critical juncture for Native

⁸¹ The concept of sovereignty that I am referring to here is that which is tied to the government-to-government relationship of Native Nations to the U.S. It is important to acknowledge, though, that this form of sovereignty is not supported by all tribal peoples in the U.S. As related in the Cherokee One Feather, “David Inciong is a Native Hawaiian and member of the Hawaiian Independence Action Alliance. He calls the bill [to equate Native Hawaiians status to that of federally recognized] ‘repugnant’ and in a recent statement said the bill is ‘railroading native Hawaiians into a nefarious U.S. hostage box.... We do not desire to be on equal footing with American Indians under the Department of the Interior nor subjected to its paternalistic practices.”

Nations as they stand at the brink of a new era, one that will hopefully continue to move towards increasing recognition of the sovereignty of Native Nations and not toward policies of social assimilation and termination.

The complex issue of sovereignty is, of course, intricately bound with political, cultural, and economic concerns (Wilkins and Lomawaima 2001). As Native Nations expand their economies, their ability to further exercise their sovereignty becomes more regularly challenged even as it grows (Smith 2000). The process of entrepreneurship is related to the concept of sovereignty because entrepreneurship is a sovereign action that reinforces ideas of independence and self-reliance. In this way, entrepreneurship and small business ownership have deep sociocultural consequences. They teach about the practice of, and reinforce the importance of, sovereignty. The resultant combination from entrepreneurial endeavors of economic impact plus an emphasis on independence and action-taking can lead to greater community understanding and support of efforts made towards the strengthening of Native Nation sovereignty.

Sovereignty for Native Nations is the power to create and implement decisions independently of the United States federal government. “Sovereignty signals a centralized system of governmental authority that allows for the assertion of independence within and control over a territory” and beyond Dennison implies (Dennison 2012). As Valerie Lambert elucidates in *Choctaw Nation*, there are three aspects of sovereignty: (1) it is legally constructed as a bundle-of-inherent-powers (rather than treated as a monolithic concept), (2) Native Nations must exercise their powers in the context of other overlapping and competing sovereignties (federal, state, etc.), and (3) even when these rights are legally well-defined, Native Nations are not always permitted to exercise these Native Nations’ sovereign rights

(Lambert 2007). Unlike much popular rhetoric, sovereignty is not a “special privilege.” It is a contractual obligation. Much as the United States fought to free itself from England’s rule, Native Nations have continued to fight to free themselves from federal control. As Kevin Bruyneel argues in reference to his “third space of sovereignty,” Native Nations will never be fully disengaged from the United States due to their locations as nations *within* a nation. Their sovereignty will thus always be compromised to some extent (Bruyneel 2007). The dance between our nations as they challenge political and legal limits is an old one, but for Native Nations there is the added threat that if they push too hard, or not enough, they too will be terminated.

The importance of sovereignty to a successful economy cannot be overstated⁸². Native Nation leaders must be able to not only provide opportunities for their citizens in terms of profitable businesses which can employ tribal citizens, but also to distribute their national revenue in ways they deem best. This idea is one that has been pointed to as a case of “special privilege,” but in reality is the same concept that allows states—and counties for that matter—to have their own individual laws regarding everything from alcohol regulation to allowing, or prohibiting, certain business types (such as casinos). The idea of a state having control over a Native Nation building a casino is even more problematic than if Virginia sued North Carolina for building casinos. Yet, the rhetoric continues⁸³.

⁸² The economic collapse of the Menominee Nation after being terminated (having been deemed too economically successful to need sovereignty) is only one example of this.

⁸³ Much of this rhetoric can be blamed on the massive gap on all levels of education about Native Nations that occurs – or does not occur – in the United States. When, anecdotally in my experience, both graduate students and professors don’t know that American Indians “still exist,” openly laugh at the concept of “nationhood,” and ask if you receive checks from the federal government, there is a problem with our educational system. And this is the system that trains our politicians, lawyers, etc.

What is the relationship between sovereignty and small businesses? How does sovereignty impact small businesses, and how do small businesses impact practices of sovereignty? As Russ stated about entrepreneurship, “the value of entrepreneurship for the tribe is regaining some control.” Since sovereignty is in part about control, the more flexibility a tribal government has, the more it can shape its nation in positive economic ways. The most debated of these examples is that of casino ownership, but what about businesses not owned by a Native Nation? As Robert Miller succinctly states, “It is an exercise of economic sovereignty when tribal governments and communities decide what types of businesses to allow in Indian country and what business endeavors a reservation community will support” (Miller 2008). Furthermore, because Native Nations are immune from many U.S. regulations, and not at all subject to states’ regulations (unless under special state compact between the Native Nation and state), tribal governments aid businesses in ways not available to other political entities in the U.S. This includes opportunities that can include direct investment by the government. For example, as was discussed earlier, these can include loans at reasonable interest rates from the government or building business incubators to encourage private business growth and even using tribal land as collateral. In addition, in the same way that is seen on federal, state, and local levels of U.S. government, as sovereign nations Native Nations can offer tax breaks and incentives, adjust zoning laws, and provide free education to business owners.

Many Native Nations have a challenging starting point for their economic development (lack of capital, lack of resources, etc.). But, there is much hope. Today there are many Native Nation-backed research projects and economic development programs designed to provide intellectual resources and directions for the newly emerging economy.

Native Nations have the opportunity to use many alternative systems of business management and sources of income to not only sustain themselves, but to re-emerge as politically and economically strong nations. Today Native Nations are starting outsource-providing companies which draw money onto the reservation (such as the Chippewa Cree's new online lending venture, Plain Green Loans (Volz 2011)). These Native Nations are also economic powerhouses in their own states. For example, the EBCI is the largest single employer in Western North Carolina and the Mississippi Choctaws are the largest single employer in their state.

When Native Nations have a solid governments and stable economic bases, they can then be *strong* sovereign powers within the United States⁸⁴. If Native Nations can operate from a strong political power base, it is less likely that significant, devastating federal assaults on Native Nation sovereignty will occur. Toward this end, many Native Nations use their own revenue to support political campaigns of politicians who are "American Indian aware" (Capriccioso 2011) and who support Native Nations rights. The ability of Native Nations to throw their hat into the political arena financially will contribute to benefits, not just for one Native Nation, but, because they are all products of blanket federal laws, all Native Nations. Says Seneca Nation President Robert Odawi Porter, "The reality is that in America, more money equals more speech and louder speech, and that same concept applies to Indian country. There are a few dozen Indian nations that have disproportionate resources, and I think it carries with it extra responsibility." Along those lines, he said some Indian nations,

⁸⁴ This connection between the ability to assert sovereignty and economic stability is reflected in many of the newest works on modern expressions of sovereignty. Says Dennison about the Osage, "Asserting ... sovereignty will take time and will require resources from gaming and other economic development" (Dennison 2012, 182).

including his own, are currently working to build a “Sovereign Nations Alliance” political action committee that can work as an umbrella to support issues that impact the greater good.

That is just one example of the strong link between economic development and the practice of sovereignty⁸⁵.

Economic Development

Conflicts

In early 2010, the EBCI people were confronted with an economic development challenge: to choose between having consistent electrical power supplied to their homes and businesses; or to have what some regarded as their most sacred piece of land desecrated. This was the option they were given by Duke Energy when it was discovered that the company was building a massive 32 acre substation on the mountainside behind Kituwah—the mother town for all Cherokee people. It would be unheard of for a similar dilemma to be put forth to U.S. citizens: e.g., put an electricity tower in front of the Washington monument or do not have consistent power to the city of Washington D.C.

It was absolutely frigid the morning of the rally for Kituwah. I felt the cold creeping into my bones as we stood around waiting for stragglers, despite having lined my pockets with “Hot Hands” heating pads. It was the last day of living at my field site and, truth be told, I was supposed to be loading our moving truck in order to leave in a few hours. The rally that day, though, was the culmination of many weeks in which I had seen the mysterious clear-cutting of the mountainside, watched the One Feather as people tried to determine what was happening, talked with people who lived in the area about how this would affect them, and

⁸⁵ In an interesting note about the use of business as a mechanism for asserting sovereignty, in 1938, the EBCI used their land’s special status as incorporated to argue against any government (via the BIA) control of their tribal affairs.

attended governmental meetings about the Duke Energy fiasco. I couldn't miss the rally now. The rally had been thrown together in a hurry since there had been no formal announcement that on that particular morning the president of Duke Energy, James Rogers, was coming to meet with Chief Hicks for a closed door meeting to discuss an agreement. Unfortunately, most people could not get out of work or school on such short notice and there were only nine of us left to march to the tribal council house. By this time, the other tribal council members had heard about the meeting and demanded that they, too, be allowed into the meeting. We stood outside the council house shivering with our signs until Mr. Rogers drove by. Apparently word of our modest rally had spread and it had been determined that his car should be escorted by the tribal police to the back of the council house where he would enter and thus avoid an incident. Shortly thereafter, a tribal policeman came to speak with Natalie of Tribal Grounds about our lack of permit (in actuality, there was no ordinance for rallies on the Qualla Boundary and he was basing his argument on a parade permit). He was polite and agreeable, merely giving us a warning for next time (See figures 6.5 and 6.6).

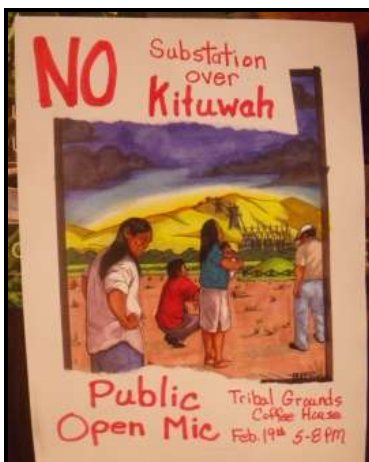


Figure 6.5: Save Kituwah flyer.



Figure 6.6: Billboard on Qualla Boundary.

At this point council member Teresa McCoy from the Big Cove Township arrived and was furious that EBCI citizens were being forced to stand in the cold. She suggested, strongly, to the Tribal Council house police that we should be allowed into the building to warm up and she promised to see if we could sit in on the proceedings. She made good on that promise and we did indeed get to see the whole proceedings. The meeting turned into an “airing of grievances” type of affair mainly, but it was also ripe with many twists and turns. The Duke spokesmen were overheard specifying that certain slides of their presentation “should not be shown to the public;” the council members and chief angled for a land-swap that would lead to a site move; the public complained about violations Duke had already made resulting in at least one house being covered in a mud landslide; and the Swain County commissioners were rightly incensed that they had been entirely ignored by Duke who had afforded their neighbor, Jackson County (who required it by law), an entire detailed presentation complete with environmental impact before beginning a different construction site there. The intrigue would not stop in that meeting as, over the coming weeks, Duke would be accused of many incidents of misconduct including destroying archaeological sites by leveling the site area by 40 feet, down to sterile subsoil, before thorough testing was done (Chavez 2010); misidentifying streams on environmental reports; and claiming erroneously

that a 32 acre power station could be classified as an “upgrade” to a minor power line (this last item was the point they used to claim that they did not need to inform anyone of their activities).

This controversy may illustrate many things: the feeling of entitlement that large corporations have of being untouchable, the tenacity of citizens when confronted with this threat, and how politicians can work on behalf of those citizens. But I believe that this example best illustrates what the problems of economic development fully entail for Native Nations like the EBCI. That winter of 2010 had been challenging for the Qualla Boundary. The rockslides and snowstorms blocked not only people trying to travel to and from the Qualla Boundary, but power had been down for days on end, leaving people trying to warm their homes with only wood stoves (this, as well as other power outage-related issues, has unfortunately led to occasional house fires (McKie 2010c), and businesses closed completely. On top of this, the new tower to the casino was being built and would require even more energy than Qualla Boundary currently used. Duke Energy’s promise, after their plans for the substation were exposed, was that this power station, beginning to be built on what some saw as the EBCI’s most sacred location, would solve all of these issues.

The real problem, however, was that the EBCI did not own this part of the land. Land in the mountains, especially usable land, is scarce and expensive. In 19996, the EBCI purchased the Kituwah mound from a farmer’s family who had owned it for generations. But as news spread that the newly casino-owning nation was buying land, the surrounding parcels’ prices sky-rocketed beyond the EBCI’s budget allotment. This lack of property ownership left the EBCI in a weaker position against the Duke Energy behemoth. Therefore, we have issues of economic development for small business owners and for the casino since,

in order to grow, they need this power. We also have the ability of Native Nations to buy land (and then put it into federal trust), which is unequivocally an economic development issue. In order for Native Nations to protect these sacred areas, they have to be economically empowered, but this economic empowerment can then, ironically, put these very locations in peril (as the prices of this land then rise out). On a more micro level, it is interesting to note that it was Natalie Smith, co-owner of Tribal Grounds Coffee, who publically led the charge against Duke Energy even though her business stood to gain—or lose—in this encounter.

Recent Literature

There are few books published specifically about contemporary economic development for Native Nations—and few offer pragmatic support for Native Nations considering various economic development opportunities. Current prevailing theories about tribal economic development are centered on the concept of “nation-building.” In some works, nation-building constructs economic development as a holistic endeavor—bringing political systems, cultural priorities, and economic factors together to shape the whole nation rather than only addressing individual areas of concern (Smith 2000; Malcolm Wiener Center for Social Policy 2008). This, to a strong degree, draws upon the idea first put forward by Malinowski (1922, 60) that “economic life is culturally ordered, economic analysis is inseparable from cultural analysis” (Ferguson 1988; Sahlins 1985). Nation-building itself is a top-down approach emphasizing the tribal government as the primary instigator of change for the Native Nation.

Unfortunately, nation-building literature often relegates the role of the individual to voting in meetings on whether to approve a new tribal enterprise. This focus on larger systems and institutions also occurs in the wider economic development literature (e.g.,

(Escobar 1995). This dearth of “agents” in the anthropology of development has been criticized (e.g., (Everett 1997), and the role of the private business in community development has been starting to be explored (Gudeman 2001; Williamson, Imbroscio, and Alperovitz 2002). This literature highlights the interaction between the individual and society and has emphasized the role of social capital in economic development (Barber 1995; Burt 1992; Coleman 1988; Granovetter 1985; Polanyi 2001; Putnam 1993; Long and Roberts 1984). As a result, this emphasis that has been placed on a multi-vocal, multi-positional theory depicts a much richer story of development issues. My research encompasses these ideas and then furthers ideas of nation-building by showing that economy-building is a necessary foundation for nation-building to efficiently occur.

Much work in American Indian Studies uses interdisciplinary approaches to situate economics in a cultural-political context. These discussions nearly always focus on tribal enterprises, but these strategies for how to strengthen Native Nation economies can be applied to small, privately-owned business and also to the ways Native Nations can help strengthen small businesses on their reservations. One author in this realm is Dean Smith who merges economic self-sufficiency with the wide range of goals specifically constructed by each Native Nation’s leadership. Another is Matthew Snipp who discusses the shortcomings of underdevelopment theory (in Public Policy primarily in South America) in an American Indian context (Snipp 1986:145). Donald Stull then discusses how anthropologists can directly contribute to American Indian economic development through public policy (Stull 1990:206). Finally, David Vinje discusses the role of education and training in the success of tribal and private businesses (Vinje 1996:427).

In *Modern Tribal Development*, Smith recounts his work with the Center for American Indian Economic Development (CAIED), which offers technical assistance and consulting to the Native Nations in Arizona, along with his field research with reservations across the U.S. He then lays out a sample plan for Native Nations economic development. He begins by explaining why traditionally corporate solutions may not work effectively for Native Nation governments⁸⁶. First, most of these tools are only appropriate for economies that can already sustain themselves, whereas in some tribal cases the unemployment can be as high as at 90% (such as the Pine Ridge reservation (Smith 2000:93)). Second, standard economic analysis does not have the scope to encompass issues of social and health issues. Third, “all development programs need to be analyzed from both economic and culture perspectives,” (Smith 2000:94) that is, allowing the individual Native Nation to create its own goals (whether they be tribal enterprises, small business growth, and/or cultural revitalization efforts). Fourth, a development strategy has to address (at least) two levels of government not usually dealt with – e.g., tribal, federal, BIA, etc. His examples look at not just successes, but why previous programs have failed Native Nations. He then discusses the dangers of brain-drain, joblessness, and dropouts along with some hopeful suggestions to getting around this “pernicious triad” (Smith 2000). What makes Smith’s work distinctive is that it deals directly with a Native Nation’s individual goals as determined by the political process of each Native Nation (and, consequently, via its leaders) and addresses the unique legal and political situation of Native Nations.

⁸⁶ Although this should be self-evident, the goals of running a publically-traded corporation and those of running a government should not be the same i.e. (corporate profit is designed to concentrate power and monetary gain into the hands of a few people; a governmental entity other should work to benefit the greatest number of people).

Other programs that have been developed for assisting Native Nations with economic development strategies are coming out from the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development. One report that has emerged from this program is the 32 page long form called “Strategic Analysis for Native Nations” developed by Dr. Stephen Cornell and the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development. The Harvard Plan includes such questions as, “Which level of negative impact are you willing to accept [from a list] for starting a business?,” “What in your society do you hope will last?,” Which goals [from a list] are most important . . . to your community?,” and “What kind of society are you trying to build for your children . . . and all the children who come after?” (Cornell 1999). These questions clearly illustrate the differences in building a private corporation versus economic and nation-building goals. The questions also emphasize that there is no blanket solution that will fit each of the 565 Native Nations today who are pursuing economic development strategies.

In *The Development Challenge in Indian Country Today* Dr. Cornell furthermore found that a strong, stable tribal governmental body, developed and controlled by that Native Nation, must be in place in order for Native Nations to attain economic stability. In fact, this Harvard study could not find one case of successful economic development in which the Native Nation did not have a corresponding strong sense of sovereignty (as shown by who made the key decisions—the Native Nation government or the federal government; University of California, Los Angeles 1974). Altogether, these works support the idea that in order for a Native Nation to have the ability to most fully practice and defend its sovereignty, it must first possess a stable government and a stable economy.

Another recent addition to research on modern American Indian economic development is the ethnographic-based edited volume *Native American Pathways: American Indian Culture and Economic Development in the Twentieth Century*. The first chapter by Colleen O’Niell begins by reminding readers of, “the role of indigenous peoples in the history of capitalism, as well as about the nature of that economic system itself” (Hosmer and O’Neill 2004:20). The essays that follow cover a wide variety of economic experiences, spanning many enterprises from casinos to natural resource management to dancing exhibitions. Jessica Cattelino’s article introduces the concepts she would later flesh out in her book *High Stakes: Florida Seminole Gaming and Sovereignty*, by discussing (among other concepts) the idea that “money whitens” (Starn 1999). As I discussed in Chapter Four, these ideas linking money and modernity with assimilation and loss of culture (and the implicit corollary that traditional American Indians must be poor) are a central issue—not just within Native communities, but also for the larger public, and the U.S. government officials who make policies based on the legally-mistaken assumption that “assimilated” American Indians no longer need “special treatment.” Cattelino tackles this large issue by contextualizing the economic history of Seminole (“Casinos are not a ‘new buffalo’ that has descended magically on American Indian tribes. Casinos represent a new stage in the long and complex history of American Indians’ economic, political, and cultural struggles”), and voicing the views of the Seminoles on how they view change in their community. As a religious leader and local businessman told her, “Changes? I don’t see changes. Things basically have stayed the same, just taken new forms” (Hosmer and O’Neill 2004).

In the final article, *Tribal Capitalism and Native Capitalists: Multiple Pathways of Native Economy*, Duane Champagne asks whether Native Nations survive globalization. He

begins by pointing out the ability of other cultures, such as the Japanese, to participate in world markets without being seen as losing their culture. So why aren't Native Nations afforded this ability when judged by the wider non-Native society? He then discusses some examples of American Indian capitalists and compares what he terms "tribal capitalism" (i.e., a form of socialism) with Western capitalism. Here, he briefly discusses American Indian entrepreneurship, a topic that is almost absent in scholarly writing. He examines how, in his research, 70% of American Indian owned businesses are located off-reservation and how most small businesses on reservations are non-Native owned. He attributes this phenomenon to two things: better and more plentiful opportunities off of the reservation and a generally hostile American Indian attitude toward private business ownership. Although it can be argued that there are generally more opportunities off reservations, there are obviously *some* opportunities *on* reservations as non-Natives have established, in his own description, a foothold on them. In addition, if there is also a lack of businesses on these reservations, does that not mean that they have *more* opportunities for opening a business in a non-competitive environment? I also question the idea that the lack of American Indian-owned businesses on reservations is due to a hostile attitude towards business ownership. The evidence suggests that it is primarily the lack of funds and knowledge to start a business that is holding potential business owners back⁸⁷.

The Anthropology of Economy by Stephen Gudeman is a useful addition for theorizing American Indian national economies in the global context of other poor nations and communities. Gudeman critically examines how an economy is shaped, by what and by

⁸⁷ Even cursory census data can demonstrate this low income and lack of businesses that I posit here (which means no capital and no one to pass on business knowledge to), whereas proving that American Indians have a culturally pan-Indian hostile business attitude is a more spurious claim.

whom, and *for* what it is shaped. To neoclassical (and other) economic theory, Gudeman provides an anthropological perspective and foregrounds the issues of community, culture, the base (also known as the commons, which here also refers to knowledge), values of production, trade, use, identity, and the community. Gudeman's work interrogates what an economy is and how a community can shape its economy to bolster that community both economically and socially, as well as how to place itself in a wider global context.

As regards "Native Nation economic development," it is essential that we be mindful of the fact that we are not discussing merely *one* economy; we are discussing 565 different Native Nations and their individual economies. Although there are many similarities in these economies (e.g., the goal of community improvement through, for example, better health care), how the leaders of each Native Nation choose to achieve community empowerment and betterment is tribally specific. One example of this is globalization. The leaders of some Native Nations may wish to reduce their reliance on and interactions with the larger global market for many reasons ranging from the lack of need to do so to the lack of interest in letting the global *into* their community. The leaders of others, however, may want to expand their tribal enterprises—the Seminoles Hard Rock line for example—as far as they can. Although many Native Nations are not yet at the point where they have the large monetary assets, or the political assets, to be significant players in a global market, it is the prerogative of their leaders to choose the path they believe will best benefit their community.

For leaders of those Native Nations who do choose to reduce their reliance on globalization efforts by or *of* them, there are many references for aiding that goal. One of these is *Alternatives to Economic Globalization: A Report of the International Forum on Globalization* by John Cavanagh and Jerry Manders, editors. It offers alternatives to different

aspects of globalization, with examples of how these are already working, and a list of resources to help accomplish different goals. It additionally offers some suggestions for those who do want to enter a global market, but want to do so in a “globally-responsible” manner. The “alternatives” section of the book begins by explaining the Ten Principles for Sustainable Societies. These resemble arguments made in American Indian Studies about Native Nation economic development (including the above reviewed texts):

- New Democracy: all who bear the costs of the decisions get a vote
- Subsidiarity: local comes first (“whatever decisions and activities can be undertaken locally should be” (Cavanagh, Mander, and International Forum on Globalization 2004:83)
- Ecological Sustainability
- Common Heritage: Resources including the physical (e.g., land), knowledge, governmental public service (e.g., health care)
- Diversity: cultural, economic, biological
- Human Rights
- Jobs, Livelihood, Employment
- Food, Security, and Safety
- Equity: against extreme inequities (e.g., wages)
- The Precautionary Principle: pre-impact studies

Relevant to Native Nation economic development are chapters about global media, alternative business structures (focusing on size, ownership, and accountability), and new international structures (i.e., how to have internationalism without globalization, formed on democratic self-determination, balanced, trade, fair commodity prices, open access to

information and knowledge, and participating in global regulatory institutions). A larger, global perspective, such as that provided in this book, is nearly always lacking in the literature about Native Nation economic development. This needs to change.

Collectively, this literature informs the importance of economic development for Native Nations. First, it demonstrates that a strong economic base for Native Nations is needed in order to reduce their dependence on the federal government (this is aided in no small part by the accompanying lessening of poverty and higher standard of living). This, in turn, enables Native Nations to more fully express their sovereignty. To be clear, this does not imply a severing of ties with the federal government. Nor does it imply that the federal government should break its treaties with Native Nations. The stronger a Native Nation's economic base, the more of their decisions they have the ability to control and take out of the hands of entities such as the BIA (or place their own people into those positions).

A second reason for Native Nation economic development involves the "cultural revitalization" that some Native Nations, including the EBCI, are undertaking. The suppression of various societal practices of American Indians—ranging from religion to language—and the historical destruction of Native Nations economic bases, including (as previously mentioned) the removal of peoples from their homelands, resulted in the discontinuation of many of these practices. As such, many of the discourses on cultural revitalization are less concerned with revitalization, per se, than with the reclamation of techniques and practices which have been suppressed. Furthermore, although much of the literature on Native Nation practices, language specifically, puts these suppression efforts in the past, it is a battle that Native Nations still have to fight. This can be seen in the most recent example of the Menominee seventh grader who was suspended, by a non- Menominee

teacher, for teaching a fellow student how to say “I love you” in Menominee (Rickert 2012). In order to further these revitalization efforts, Native Nation leaders must begin by helping to provide ways for their citizens to train or be trained these practices. These efforts cannot be accomplished without an adequate capital base as they, of course, cost money, time, and other resources. This monetary input needed rises even further when a practice has been long discontinued, such as the previously mentioned efforts with Cherokee-identified pottery design techniques.

How Does Entrepreneurship Positively Affect Economic Development

American Indian entrepreneurship (Jorgensen 2007) has been largely overlooked by scholars for many reasons. In general scholars assume (1) that there are relatively few American Indian entrepreneurs, (2) that these individuals create relatively few jobs, and (3) that the amount of revenue their businesses generate is relatively small. All of these assumptions smack of stereotypes of American Indians being unable to succeed economically, as lacking personal initiative, and as somehow “anti-individualistic.” Additionally, because small business impacts are assumed to be so incidental on an individual level, their importance tends to be overlooked in favor of larger enterprises that promise greater returns. However, the assumption of the dearth of small businesses belies their much larger societal and economic impact when viewed as a collective of small businesses. Research on American Indian citizen entrepreneurship is critical not only because we know so little about American Indian small business owners, but also because, collectively, the actions of these individuals help address the issues of Smith’s “pernicious triad:” brain drain, dropouts, and joblessness (Smith 2000). Related to the problem of brain drain is the case of early dropouts. There are many causes of students dropping out of school

entirely, but one of the most important causes for this research is that it has been proposed that American Indian children on economically-depressed reservations see few opportunities to use their education on their own reservations.

Measurable Impacts

The employment power of small businesses in both American Indian and non-Native rural areas is regularly underestimated. Small businesses, however, are responsible for the majority of employment in many of these areas. Small businesses represent 99.7 percent of all employer firms, employ just over half of all private sector employees, pay 44 percent of total U.S. private payroll, generate 64 percent of net new jobs (over the past 15 years), and create more than half of the nonfarm private gross domestic product (GDP; Small Business Association 2007). In 1998, small businesses in rural America accounted for 90% of all businesses and employed nearly two-thirds of all rural workers (Jorgensen 2007). Of particular interest to the EBCI, these businesses had the strongest showing in service industries, including retail, accommodations, social services, and amusement. Service industries are the support system for and backbone of the already thriving tourist trade on the Qualla Boundary.

The next set of measurable benefits concerns revenue generation and retention, in particular, the multiplier effect. On the citizen's side, an increase in the multiplier effect is achieved when citizens are able to spend their money locally. For example, if an entrepreneur starts a restaurant with \$100,000, this investment money goes in to the local economy as new wages for builders and employees, new revenue to local suppliers of building materials, and food products, among other things. These new wages translate into a higher income for these employees and suppliers. This income can then be spent locally (groceries, gifts, etc.) which

means that now a third layer of people have a higher income to spend. The two key elements to the multiplier effect are investment and local spending. With money being spent locally, the effects of the initial investment are thus “multiplied” and there is an increase in economic activity and economic growth. The corollary to this concerns the entrepreneurs themselves. Entrepreneurs on reservations (as is true of other local communities) tend to be residents (Buss, Popovich, and Gemmel 1991). Because of this, they are more likely to invest their profits locally, not only in the maintenance and expansion of their business, but also in overall community services and support. The retention of this money is nearly completely lost when communities bring in large, national corporations. In an equally tangible way, these businesses also improve the quality of life for local residents who then no longer need to travel long distances and who spend much of their money on gas just to buy food, goods, and services. Because this has been an issue on the Qualla Boundary, EBCI leaders have recently implemented a “weekly shopping trip” transit services to drive citizens to Sylva (a half hour away), which helps lower the cost of shopping-related travel for its citizens, (Cherokee Transit 2011).

Small businesses also contribute to governmental support by increasing the tax base for Native Nations. In addition, they help to bear the burden shouldered by the government of economic development. Because some Native Nation governments cannot solely create enough jobs to combat unemployment, encouraging small business growth can translate to job creation. Small businesses also diversify an economy in ways that would not be feasible for the leaders of local governments, who may rely on strict federal budget and/or policy requirements or who are focused on maintaining a single revenue source, such as a gaming operation. Especially in the case of a Native Nation that relies on one income stream, small

business diversification can be the key to a thriving economy that can weather shifting policies and larger economic shocks.

Finally, the community benefits from entrepreneurship through the commitment of many business owners to supporting the local area. Monetary contributions are one such support. For example, Ron buys ads with the local ball teams and Teresa does the same with local newspapers as well as with yearbooks, football programs, and calendars. “It’s nice to know,” she explains, “that the people that you do business with are actually supporting your kids and helping out with the things.” I also encountered business owners who did volunteer work for EBCI events. For example, Zena spoke at the elementary school several times as a motivational speaker. In fact, I found that community and charity work is considered an important part of successful business ownership in Cherokee. As Joel says, “[If I didn’t care about the community], why would I be teaching other people what I’m doing? Why take all this experience to start teaching newer generations coming up what I’m doing? Otherwise, hell, I could sit back and make the money that I want.” These actions are called “corporate citizenship” by the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development whose American Indian Business of the Year Award is presented to a business owned and operated by an American Indian(s) who demonstrates good “corporate citizenship” in the community (NCAIED 2010).

Small businesses on the Qualla Boundary are regularly given advertising and awards when they are seen as contributing to the greater good. One example is River’s Edge Outfitters, a new business in Cherokee that received the Business of the Year award in no small part due to their charitable work in the community (McKie 2011m). Another example of the “greater good” aspect is the article which ran on May 5th, 2011 about the Pizza Inn and

Dairy Queen that signed on to partner with the EBCI Cooperative Extension's 4-H Hungry to Help Campaign and EBCI Emergency Management to help out in raising money for the Japanese Relief Effort. The article states,

Leo and Sandra James have been a part of the Cherokee community owning and operating these two establishments for 44 years. Through a series of different fundraising efforts, the partners have been working hard to make a difference. One hundred percent (100%) of the proceeds of these fundraising efforts will go to the Red Cross to assist Japan in their time of need. [James 2011]

This article highlights the importance of several elements to business on the Qualla Boundary: the contribution to the greater good, the portion of this contribution (100%), and that the owners are established in the community for decades.

Psychological Impacts

The impacts of small businesses go far beyond the physical ramifications on the economy. The psychological impacts are also acute. In terms of brain drain and drop-outs, the presence of small businesses on reservations are not only a physical and daily reminder to students that there are diverse opportunities available to them if they choose to continue their education, but small businesses also remind them that when they advance their education, there will be opportunities not just for employment but for them to start their own businesses. Because they can see their fellow community members succeeding, the false notion that one's "Indian-ness" is inherently associated positively with poverty and negatively with success in business begins to dissolve.

These psychological effects are important to address because of the lived realities of these stereotypes, and, consequently, the dismantling of them, have even more profound affects than previously thought. New research being done in the area of genes, the brain, and our environments cuts right to the heart of stereotypes of American Indians as business

owners and entrepreneurs (and, indeed, the implications of stereotypes in general).

Physically, our genetic material may be immutable, but their activity is certainly not. As stated by Dr. Fine, our environment, behavior, and how we think *can and do* change the activity of our genes—i.e., which get “switched off and on” (expressed) and when.

Additionally, these behaviors themselves can *directly* change our neural structures (Fine 2010:177). As she references Brian Wexler here:

In addition to having the longest period during which brain growth is shaped by the environment, human beings alter the environment that shapes their brains to a degree without precedent among animals. These human alterations in the shared social environment include physical structures, laws and other codes of behavior, food and clothes, spoken and written language, and music and other arts. In recent decades, children in Euro-American societies have been raised in almost entirely human-created environments. It is this ability to shape the environment that in turn shapes our brains that has allowed human adaptability and capability to develop at a much faster rate than is possible through alteration of the genetic code itself. *This transgenerational shaping of brain function through culture also means that processes that govern the [changing] of societies and cultures have a great influence on how our individual brains and minds work.* [emphasis added]⁸⁸

This research is helping deconstruct the argument that a group of people is “hardwired” biologically for or against an activity (e.g., being incapable of entrepreneurship). At the same time, this research suggests that in a genuine and physical sense, stereotypes do matter. If an individual grows up in an environment in which they are told, explicitly with words or implicitly by the lack of role models, they cannot be an entrepreneur or own a business, this can become a self-fulfilling prophecy. This research also gives us hope for countering these stereotypes, suggesting that new environments, new interactions, and new behaviors can change these stereotypes on an individual level and on a community level.

⁸⁸ For reference, this theory is called a neuroconstructivist perspective on brain development.

Impacts on Sovereignty

The myriad benefits of small business success on reservations include a strengthening of Native Nation sovereignty. This is accomplished through reduced dependence on outside decision makers, on outside funding, and on outside policy makers; an increase in economic stability; and the psychological impact of self-advocacy in practice. A meeting that occurred at the brand new middle and high school in Cherokee illustrates this point. A few months prior to this meeting I had attended the opening ceremonies for the new school. It is the first Silver LEED⁸⁹ certified building of its size on the east coast and was beautifully constructed. The gardens, smart boards, theater, large stadium, Ravensclaw site reports (the archaeological reports on the schools site), and the elk who roamed campus before school were stunning. Since that opening, two other people that I interviewed mentioned the T-shirt printing business that Ernie Whitehouse (an EBCI citizen) helped run at the school for the high school students. I called Ernie and he agreed to meet with me and introduce me to the screen-printing business. Ernie met me downstairs the next afternoon to direct me through the labyrinth of the school. He was almost middle-aged and had a salt-and-pepper ponytail and a laid-back demeanor that indicated a high level of patience that seemed especially suited for working with high school students. He was from the Qualla Boundary and had gone to the previous incarnation of Cherokee High School (about a mile away from the new school) himself. We talked for about an hour about the first business he and the kids tried before printing t-shirts (a garden) and the transition to the new school that year. When I asked him about why he thought that small business schools were beneficial to the students, he explained, “The biggest thing is a good work ethic, but to me the *bigger* thing is actually not

⁸⁹ <http://www.usgbc.org/> “LEED, or Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is an internationally-recognized green building certification system.” The ratings are: Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum.

what's taught 'in the factory,' the bigger thing is [what we work on in the classroom, which is] more self-advocacy." Here Ernie emphasizes that small business ownership teaches and reinforces the idea of self-advocacy. And what is self-advocacy if not the foundation for the exercise of self-determination and sovereignty?

Small business owners need these qualities to sustain their own businesses and to impart skills to their employees. This tends to be lacking in larger businesses due to the lack of direct interaction between the employees and the actual business owner. In the small businesses on the Qualla Boundary, the owners that I spoke with train their employees personally and are at their businesses regularly, interacting with their employees. Some even involved their employees at every level of the business, encouraging them to view the financial books of the business and participate in the decision-making processes for the business based on that newly acquired knowledge. Before class one day, Russ and I got a chance to talk in his office, which is housed in the Ginger Lynn Welch (GLW) building. This unassuming building lies on a side road away from the tourists next to other governmental buildings such as Emergency Medical Services and the Boys Club. I spent many hours at GLW. The Sequoyah Fund, Cherokee Business offices, and many of the economic development offices were there and many business classes were held in the GLW conference rooms. Russ related to me a story that illustrates many of the principles he tries to teach during his business education classes. Here, he describes speaking with a young employee:

I'm going to teach you everything there is to know about how this business operates.' They knew *what* to do. They didn't understand the *why*. So I showed them the profit and loss statement. They'd never seen a P&L statement. I showed them how to read it, what it meant. I said here's this line. This is how you affect this line. When you do this, it affects this line this way. When you do that, it affects this line. They went, 'Oh wow!' I showed them what a breakeven point was. Showed them why that mattered. They understood everything. They saw my salary. They saw their own pay. I just took their pay and I clumped it all together as 'people expense' because I didn't want them

to see what each one of them was making but I put it together as people expense and they went that's a big number. I said well you know why it's a big number? You know the stuff that I take out of your paycheck and send to the government every week? They said 'Yeah.' I said I have to match part of that from my pocket and put it in there and send it in. They went, 'Really? Wow. I didn't know that.' They thought that everything that went into the cash register belonged to me and then I just paid them a little bit out of that. . . . But I said look, here's how we make money. Now if you hold the thing together while I'm gone for a week and you can show that you've made money that week, I'll give you a little bonus. . . They both made a forty-five dollar bonus the next week when I got back. I mean they were so excited. They said, "Look we made money! This is great!" *But from then on, the place went through the roof. Through the roof. Because they treated it like it was their own business. They were no longer employees. They were part owners and I continued to pay them a bonus until I sold the business.* [emphasis added]

These skills and values have an impact on the larger community, not only in the ever-widening circle of family and friends of the employees, but also as a general influence on the public. In other words, the public can see how this self-advocacy affects the success of small business owners and, in turn, how this same type of self-advocacy can impact the success of the tribe.

Negative Impacts

Sovereignty: Relinquishing Native Nation Rights in Order to do Business with Outside Corporations

One serious challenge mentioned previously, with no real solution in sight, is the legal issues of property ownership. Businesses from outside the reservation (and also from within as we have seen) are reluctant to locate onto reservations due to the trust status of American Indian land. This trust status means that businesses can only lease tribal land for finite amounts of time (even if they are long term leases, decades long in some cases) and can never own the land. This, first, makes business owners wary of locating a business on tribal land as they often cannot visualize the long term sustainability of their business (Perdue 2005:94). Second, the owner must make all of the investment on the property (i.e., the

building and all that is in it) without actually owning the land. Many Native Nations circumvent this problem by absorbing the building costs and physically having buildings at the ready or constructing them as needed. This makes the Native Nation an investor in that business, which, as we will see, can create problems. Left is the uncomfortable choice of a risk-taking business person who does not own the land he builds on; or a risk-taking Native Nation which must invest and absorb the costs of what is often an unproven business.

Further complicating these issues is the federal protection that Native Nations have in the form of sovereign immunity. Native Nations are protected from the loss of assets in a manner similar to the sovereign immunity that the federal government, states, and local governments benefit from (National Congress of American Indians 2012). Businesses, though, generally do not want to enter in to negotiations with entities that they cannot sue. In some circumstances, Native Nations have partially waived their sovereign immunity in order to bring in these businesses. As the waiver for the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians in Michigan demonstrates (in regards to a parking garage associated with their casino), this can be a complex and problematic process. In their case, a waiver was signed, but not by a tribal official who had been deemed by the nation to have the authority to do so. This led to a court battle ending in September 2010 which was decided against the nation and reinstated their waiver of sovereign immunity.

CHAPTER 7

TOURISM: WHERE ARE THE INDIANS?

Focus Statement

I worked right there [at the visitors center] and people would come in and ask us the same questions that they're asking now: Where are the Indians? Do they live in teepees? . . . I don't care how the tribe spins their advertising budget and how they market the area, just so they get it right. That's all I care about. [Teresa, Granny's, EBCI citizen]

Pulling up to Granny's restaurant that day was an unusual sight. Normally the generous parking lot is packed with locals and occasional tourists (some driving in from states away on certain days for specials like fried squash blossoms) who make this their regular dining out establishment. Granny's is a buffet restaurant that has a large, open dining space surrounded by windows and speckled with some EBCI crafts, like baskets for plants. The buffet is at one end of the restaurant, with additional space for private events on that same side. Their menu changes daily and the buffet line offers hand-carved meats. The food is southern country in style--with fried chicken, mashed potatoes, green beans, macaroni and cheese, chicken and dumplings, gravy, vegetable soup, and many more comfort foods that rotate based on the day and season. The year of 2009 marked their 25th anniversary—quite an accomplishment for a profession in which about three in five restaurants close or change ownership within their first three years (King et al. 2005). Although it happened only a few decades ago, they also weathered many changes in their clientele, going against the advice the previous owner had given to them to not serve the local people, “During the years, everything's kind of changed. When we first opened, we

were getting the tourist people. We were getting the families from the mill towns in South Carolina and Georgia and stuff and then after they shut all those down, our clientele changed. We still had some of the same people. We have some of the kids that used to come in bringing their kids now. Of course, that's not as common as it used to be."

After knocking at the door and having Ray let me in, I realized that Granny's had, like many business on the Qualla Boundary, closed for the season. The seasonal reprieve is actually a boon for businesses in many ways as owners take the time to remodel, take inventory, and travel in search of new products. Today Teresa and her family were setting Granny's up for an indoor community yard sale—an endeavor that could not occur outside during the winter—the normal hustle and bustle of the wait staff and gregarious conversations of the customers replaced by baby clothes and general tidying-up being done by Teresa's daughter. Teresa is a vibrant woman who has a smile for everyone and a dedication to the business and employees that has held Granny's together for 25 years; Ray sat quietly back, deep in thought for the most part but interjected thoughts about Cherokee, the economy, and what he has learned from his decades of award-winning years in the service industry. While we were gathered around one of the supper tables, Teresa talked about the changes that the casino has instigated in the tourist base,

[Our season is] spread out more [now]. When we first got up here, we opened from about the middle of May till the end of October. Now we open about the middle of March and stay open through the end of November, Thanksgiving weekend, somewhere but in order to make as much money as we used to make, we have to do that because it's just not the same people coming through anymore—it's people coming to the casino or people driving through to somewhere else.

The "people coming to the casino" are now couples who come to the casino rather than the big families that used to flock to Cherokee for a family weekend. This shift in the visitor base was just one of many changes brought about by the installment of the casino on the Qualla

Boundary that impacted local business practices and is an issue that the EBCI government is now beginning to address (see figure 7.1).



Figure 7.1: Granny's.

One of my primary goals in this dissertation is to show that small businesses on reservations, particularly on the Qualla Boundary, are not—and do not have to be—solely composed of tourist-centric models. However, to ignore the obvious proliferation of tourism-based small businesses on the Qualla Boundary⁹⁰ due to its prime location is to ignore a principle element of the EBCI's economy and their rich history of business ownership . I dedicate an entire chapter to this topic for this reason.

Today, there is a rapid transformation of the tourist businesses on the Qualla Boundary occurring at the same time that Native Nations across the United States are looking

⁹⁰ In this section, the differences between Cherokee the town and the rest of the Qualla Boundary are the clearest as almost all of the tourism that takes place on the Qualla Boundary is focused in Cherokee.

for ways to expand and strengthen their economies. Many other Native Nations that have tourist-based economies are beginning to reinvent their overall tribal business identities towards a new “heritage tourism” model. This heritage tourism model, sometimes called cultural tourism⁹¹, emphasizes cultural and historic education as its primary goals as well as the presentation of an “authentic⁹²” cultural image. This recent development has had a dramatic effect on local small businesses by requiring them, tacitly and/or overtly, to remodel their identities via the physical manifestations of their businesses. More than merely a cyclical business update, this reinvention has considerable implications not only for how their identity as a business is constructed, but also how the Native Nation is then perceived by those visiting from outside the nation’s boundaries. From this transformation springs my last research question: how are the identities of small business owners, as expressed through their own stories as well as the physical forms of their businesses, and that of their community recursively formed in this dynamic socioeconomic process?

Historical Changes

It is apparent from Chapter Three on the broader EBCI history that the EBCI have had a long-standing and thriving business community— recall from the historical conversation above that the EBCI had formal incorporation as a Native Nation via the Sugar & Silk Company and through their tribal logging endeavors since 1847. Their recorded tourism business industry has been active since 1902, with individual entrepreneurship efforts beginning even earlier. Many of these businesses continue to serve the tourist population who come to experience the lush environment of the mountains and the Qualla

⁹¹ “Heritage” tourism generally refers to the cultural tourism of your own home country.

⁹² This term will be unpacked below.

Boundary and to meet the EBCI people. Beginning in the 1980s, however, there was a steady decline in the tourism business on the Qualla Boundary. Partly in order to address this, the EBCI voted to open a casino. Their first small casino was successful and enabled EBCI leaders to start making many structural improvements (e.g., schools, hospital, a new justice center (McKie 2011n), etc.). But other changes for the EBCI's representation and the tourists to Cherokee were taking place simultaneously.

Early Tourism

In the early days of the tourism trade on the Qualla Boundary, visitors were interested in what is termed "nostalgia tourism" (Dann 1996:218). Visitors wanted to see a vision of American Indians that matched what they saw in the movies depicting historical Plains Indians (Lambert 2011b:189). The Western movie genre, well known for its nearly exclusive portrayal of historical Plains Indians as representing all American Indians, was peaking in the early 1950s with over 400 Western movies released between the years of 1950-1954 alone, which then translated into a surge of interest in American Indians (Anonymous 2011b)⁹³. The EBCI accommodated this expectation with attractions like Frontier Land which had, among other attractions, a train ride taken by tourists that was attacked by real Indians (based on the conversations I had with those who lived on Qualla at that time, they were played for the most part by EBCI citizens)⁹⁴. In the past decade there has been a shift from nostalgia

⁹³ This peaking of the western genre would be seen again in the 1960's with the entrée of Spaghetti Westerns, but the effect on nostalgia tourism for American Indians would be complicated, as we will see later, by the Red Power movement.

⁹⁴ There is another term, "fictional tourism," that somewhat applies here, referring to the visiting of physical sites mentioned in fictional works. Right now, the La Push Quileute nation of Washington state are experiencing this as they are in the midst of a deluge of Twilight fans who are coming to their reservation in response to the books featuring of the Quileute's name (their actual history and culture were not researched by the Twilight author) (Smith 2011). I believe that another term is needed however, to adequately describe what

tourism to heritage, or cultural, tourism. Along with this etic change, there has been an emic call from some EBCI citizens for a more historically-accurate rendering of their past, told in their own words, for both tourists and EBCI citizens. This has resulted in the large undertaking of “cultural revitalization” for the EBCI. This new primary emphasis on historical accuracy (from the EBCI perspective, rather than the colonizers’ perceptions) and the concept of authenticity has had many consequences. I will analyze these issues through the lens of small businesses.

Early Tourism History

The EBCI has long been selling baskets and goods to those from outside the Qualla Boundary. Early written reports described EBCI women walking to Asheville to sell baskets and visitors coming to Cherokee to buy blowguns in 1907 (Finger 1991). Cherokee then became firmly entrenched as the primary tourist destination in the mountains of North Carolina with the institution of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park (GSMNP – chartered in 1934) and the subsequent construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway (begun in 1935) that leads visitors directly through Cherokee and onto the mountain pass to Tennessee.

If you were to drive to Cherokee in the more recent past, during the 1960s for instance, you would take the 441 highway which “T’s” at the main street of the town. As previously mentioned, visitors to Cherokee at this time were interested in nostalgia tourism—specifically the old west style of cowboys and Indians. The EBCI and its citizens provided this entertainment through rides, restaurants such as the Tipi Restaurant⁹⁵, souvenirs, and

began in 1955 with Disneyland, which is the creation of theme parks specifically based on fictionalized works (movies, book, television, etc.), possibly “fiction-park tourism.”

⁹⁵ This restaurant was a good example of the tourist/local crossover business as it was loved by both tourists (who still ask what happened to it to this day) and the EBCI citizens who frequented it and lament its passing.

shows. Here there would be people dressed up in plains regalia sitting in teepees for tourists to take pictures with. There was also the aforementioned Frontierland (in operation from 1962-1982) complete with rides and games. The Tribe produced and sold their own tourist tomahawks and moccasins, too—an enterprise, known as the Cherokee Crafts and Moccasin Factory, that employed many EBCI citizens. Nostalgia items, like the tomahawks, were the primary products sold to tourists. Many of the items in the downtown stores were the same, as they were sourced from the same factories. There were few EBCI-made arts and crafts readily available, but tourists (especially collectors) could hire a guide to take them to an artist's home to buy their crafts. The emphasis on nostalgia tourism severed two vital purposes: (1) it proved to be a solid business model for over four decades as described to me by the business owners themselves and reflected in many EBCI discourses today (see Appendix C) and (2) it kept a protective boundary between the large seasonal influx of tourists and the private lives of the EBCI citizens (Beard-Moose 2009).

Since this time, the EBCI, as I will discuss below, has been accused of selling out and undermining its own heritage with these early efforts that were far from an accurate portrayal of EBCI life. But, in reality, their business model was exactly that—a business model. Their model should be compared to that of Disneyland and Dollywood (backed by Dolly Parton, who, to my knowledge, has never been accused of selling out her heritage for a profit). In essence, the EBCI were promoting the town of Cherokee as you would a theme park based upon the immensely popular western movies of the day. Tourists came to see a depiction of the American Indians that reflected the movies they watched in their hometown theaters. It was not unlike going to Disneyland to see the real Mickey Mouse (especially since neither the Plains Indian nor Mickey Mouse existed in real life as they did on the silver screen).

When people came to Cherokee, those images they had in mind shaped what they expected to experience. And the fact is that for nearly 50 years, the EBCI were very successful at fulfilling these expectations. The nostalgia tourism market was a boon for the EBCI people. In addition, this market also provided the EBCI people a way to distance their personal lives from the invasiveness of tourism (Beard-Moose 2009). Invasion of privacy is a very common issue in tourist-heavy economies, and, indeed, is the case on the Qualla Boundary. Having a thematic front to present to tourists and distinct locations for tourists to congregate enabled EBCI citizens to construct a buffer within which to go to school, practice their various religions, and live their overall lives separately from the inquiries of the tourists.

The Red Power Movement

The Red Power movement began in the late 1960s and continued through the early seventies as part of the Civil Rights Era. The psychological impact of the Red Power movement was profound, not just for American Indians but for all Americans. American Indians, assumed by most non-Natives to be “vanishing,” were, suddenly and surprisingly, much more alive, modern, and active because of the Red Power movement. This surprise manifested itself in at least two ways for the non-Native public: support and/or fear. This movement and its consequences have been written about extensively, but what specific impacts did this movement have on the EBCI?

For the EBCI, this movement had repercussions, not just for the EBCI as American Indians, but also for their economy. As I have described earlier, tourists coming to Cherokee before this time had little—if any—contact with American Indians other than what they saw in the movies (e.g., the highly-popular John Wayne films) and on TV (such as *Wild West*, 1965-69). These representations of American Indians focused on Plains Indians, so when

tourists visited Cherokee, that is what they expected and other portrayals were soundly rejected (such as the examples of chiefing that will be discussed below (Lambert 2011b:189)). In *their* reality as tourists, Plains regalia was the accurate representation of all American Indians.

When the Red Power movement reached full force, however, images of AIM members filled American television screens. These were no longer the war-bonneted, tipi-building, loin-clothed American Indians of the silver screen who spoke little more than “how.” These American Indians wore jeans, t-shirts, and sunglasses and spoke perfect English as they described their demands. The impact of this change in imagery cannot be overstated. And for those who supported the American Indian movement, this had two effects. First was the realization that the movie-American Indian was not the same as the modern American Indian. Second was the realization that American Indians were still very much here and that (if you were someone who supported, or who was inspired by, their current actions) you could, somewhere in your genealogy, be one, too.

Tourists’ interests began to shift from nostalgia tourism on the Qualla Boundary to heritage tourism. The Red Power movement demanded that the larger public see American Indians for what they really were at that moment—not what they were 500 years ago or what they would be in 500 years (i.e., vanished) and the public began, bit by bit, to respond (Josephy, Nagel, and Johnson 1999; Cobb 2008). However, once this “cowboy and Indian” nostalgia was altered by widely-broadcast images of the Wounded Knee Occupation and the Alcatraz Occupation, a void was created. The public began to realize that there was more to American Indians than movie nostalgia, but they had no information to fill this newly-discovered gap in their knowledge. The public was left with a desire for “authenticity” but

had no real way to conceptualize what individual Native Nations meant outside of the image created for mass consumption. The history textbooks, movies, and television shows made by non-Natives did not provide the general public with enough information to go on. Therefore, when tourists came to Cherokee after the Red Power movement, you began hearing complaints about a lack of “authenticity.” Words such as “tacky,” “old timey,” and “not real” were heard (see quotes below). At the same time, the Red Power movement was also affecting EBCI citizens.

Although there was much resistance to the AIM movement for many reasons described elsewhere, the movement did check the non-Native created fantasy of the vanished American Indian. Where blatant and violent racist aggression was once the norm, non-Natives began reconsidering their actions when faced with the (imagined at times) possibility that AIM would be called and the American Indians would fight back collectively. With the subsequent passage of various acts during that time (Indian Child Welfare Act, Indian Religious Freedom Act, etc.) it became okay—or at least legally protected—to be “out” as an American Indian. American Indians who had hidden their identity in order to live peacefully began to be shed (this “hiding” could have been as simple as denying a tribal affiliation or as complex as hiding religious ceremonies). For the EBCI, this meant that some citizens wanted a change in their public representation. As Ron related previously, this was a heavy influence on his choice of products when opening his own store. He reiterates that, “There’s a lot of shirts at the other stores, I call them junk, I call them tourists shirts. I won’t carry it. . . I carry more shirts [now] that Natives buy than tourists.” Therefore, instead of being forced to provide the public with a movie version of American Indians, they wanted to be the authors of their own story about the Qualla Boundary—not just for the tourists or a sense of

educating the public, but also because they wanted their children be surrounded by their own language (on signs, in documents, etc.) and a historical grounding that was not authored by Paramount Pictures. They also criticized the lack of resources for themselves and their children to learn about their past and immerse themselves (if not already in artist families) in EBCI-based crafts and practices (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians 2005) with their own people—and, as Ron related, the lack of resources in buying products for *themselves* that they believed represented their culture. Without funding and facing a rapidly shrinking economy, though, this transition could not occur until the 1990s.

Modern Tourism Development

The accusations of “selling out” and being “inauthentic” started being expressed towards parks like Frontierland both within the American Indian community and externally. By 1982, it was closed⁹⁶. Clearly, the draw of nostalgia tourism, which had served the EBCI so well for decades, was far less marketable and 1980s tourism in Cherokee continued to decline rapidly⁹⁷. Additionally, there were larger market changes taking place worldwide. One was a change in the larger tourist market during the solidification of the Commercial Jet Era (the more public commercialization of jet flight) which made flying more accessible. This caused a shift from family road-trips to airline-based vacations as a result of the declining in price of airline tickets. This reduction in road trips and increase in plane flights led to fewer tourists coming to Cherokee for family vacations. It is an hour from the nearest small airport in Asheville and three hours from the larger Atlanta international airport. Where

⁹⁶ Coincidentally, Dollywood began in 1961 as “Rebel Railroad” and reopened as Dollywood in 1986, also reinventing its image into a more modern reflection of mountain culture.

⁹⁷ By the 1970’s the average income of an EBCI citizen was down to 60% of the national average (Perdue 2005, 94).

could the EBCI tourist market go from there? It was in 1997 that the EBCI opened the Harrah's Cherokee Casino in an attempt to generate more income for the tribe.

Original reports about early nostalgia tourism assert that the idea for it came from “local white entrepreneurs” who came on to the Qualla Boundary selling tomahawks and multicolored headdresses to the visitors (Finger 1984; Thompson 2009). Even if these reports are true, the EBCI people were not a faceless crowd, blindly following the whims of savvy non-EBCI entrepreneurs. As seen throughout their history of interaction with white settlers, the Cherokees are politically- and economically astute, and there is no reason to think this case was otherwise. The EBCI developed a thriving market (as conveyed to me by long-term business owners) that brought in much-needed revenue which nearly supported their entire nation for decades. Their entrepreneurial skills from craft-making to market testing grew along with their market. Basket makers developed new styles, people who “chiefed” tried different outfits, and the stores brought in new products. It appears that the leading reason that many more EBCI citizens (other than those in the two most prominent families) did not initially outright own businesses was that they did not have the capital to fund businesses. This all changed with the opening of the casino. After the casino became successful, the money for investment came to the EBCI government and citizens.

Representation, Authenticity, and the Market

Museum to Host Southeast Tribes Festival: “What’s unique about this festival is that only enrolled tribal members are included,” said Barbara Duncan, Education Director at the Museum. “This means that all the traditions are authentic.” [McKie 2011]

These shifts in the larger American market caused the EBCI to have nearly two difficult decades after the 1980s (including the initial construction of the first and second casinos)—decades in which travel books would publish reviews like,

Cherokee is the last gasp of commercialism at the edge of the national park, a traffic-clogged gauntlet of places where you and See Live Bears, Eat Boiled Peanuts, Pan for Gold, or ride the Rudicoster. . . . The upscale casino, the region's biggest draw, looms over a fading roadside lined by tacky old-time souvenir stands like the "Big Chief."
[Kirby, Smith, and Wilkins 1992]

Press like this encouraged the EBCI tourism board's foray into the cultural/heritage tourism model. This issue of a location becoming "too touristy" or "too popular" and thereby invalidating its "authenticity" is a well-known problem in tourism studies. In these cases, a location is promoted as authentic, becomes popular, then is deemed too popular (i.e., mainstream), and is finally abandoned by tourists in search of the next authentic (read: undisturbed by the modern, tourist world) location (Colloredo-Mansfeld 1999:197).

The Search for Authenticity

In addition to these market changes, the time post-Red Power led to people becoming more interested in rediscovering their American Indian heritage—this trend emerged as the overt racism of the earlier decades before the civil rights movement transformed into more subdued and subtle aversive racism (Dovidio and Gaertner 1986). Tourists no longer wanted the Indians of the big screen; they wanted "real" American Indians—the ones that were part of what they believed to be their own heritage⁹⁸. Consequently, it is not just that these tourists wanted to experience the heritage of the EBCI. For some, they believe it to be their heritage too (Deloria 1998a). Therefore, these types of tourists came to Cherokee *to be Cherokee* and now wanted the "authentic" experience. Yet many of these tourists did not know what the

⁹⁸ Today, during a time in which illegal immigration is being heavily persecuted and Berlin-style walls are being constructed on U.S. borders, claims to being one of the "original Americans" almost seems a necessity. As I was further thinking about the impact of politics on this new desire to be American Indian, I remembered a quote from Abe: "I do remember after 9/11 hit, that was when I took my biggest leap at the gallery; I doubled my business." I do not believe it was a coincidence that in a time of attack on U.S. soil by a foreign threat that people would reach out for what is deemed to be the most true, authentic symbol of "American-ness:" the American Indian.

“authentic” experience looked like. As in the quote above, they did not believe it was the pan-Indian plastic tomahawks in the shops, but there were significant gaps in their knowledge. I experienced this many times as I sat in the stores located in the new Cultural District of Cherokee.

On one day in June, my sister and I were visiting a store called Medicine Man and enjoying the spring combination of plentiful sunshine and a cool breeze on the store’s porch overlooking the Oconaluftee River. As we made our way back inside, there was a man in his 30s, wearing jeans and a t-shirt, squatting in front of one of the glass display cases filled from top to bottom with American Indian styled wooden pipes with stone-carved pipe bowls. He had an intent look on his face and when the cashier asked if she could help him, he said, “Which of these is your most authentic?” The cashier told him that they were all made by American Indians and pointed out the ones made by artists from the Qualla Boundary. This was not what he was looking for, although he was having trouble describing exactly what he was envisioning. He then rephrased the question to, “But which is the most traditional?” He further specified that the more ornate ones did not seem like they were “traditional” and that *he* believed the ones used “before” would have been more functional looking (he stopped short of using the word “primitive,” but that seemed to be the concept that he was trying to convey). The cashier attempted to reassure him that decorations have always been a part of even the most functional of items, but quickly gave up after explaining that she could not be sure that any of them were exact historical replicas. She then directed him to the Qualla Arts & Crafts Mutual, Inc.—more commonly known as The Co-Op⁹⁹. I would see these kinds of

⁹⁹ The Co-Op is an organization that was formed in 1946 by EBCI artisans and the EBCI government to promote and sell EBCI specific crafts. Today this also includes a small selection of other Southeastern Indian goods.

exchanges repeated in various guises again and again. It is an example that succinctly brings together many concepts ranging from a business's identity to the representation of the EBCI as a people (see figure 7.2)



Figure 7.2: Storefront sign on Qualla Boundary.

On the flip side of this is the claim to knowledge of authenticity that is made tacitly by tourists. As I sat in Native American Craft Shop chatting with Todd, the co-owner, I suddenly heard the unmistakable sounds of The Indian Drumbeat. DUM-dumdumdum DUM-dumdumdum DUM-dumdumdum. I casually glanced over toward the noise to see a father trying to subtly thump on a quite large (nearly three feet across) drum that was for sale while his son, probably about seven years old, watched on. I looked back at Todd with a raised eyebrow; he shrugged back in a “What are you going to do?” motion and continued

with his discussion. This drum beat would be repeated again and again while I was in tourist-oriented stores; sometimes on large drums, sometimes on plastic drums no larger than your palm. Some stores even had “No Drumming” signs posted on the nicer drums to ward off the incessant beat. But it was never, as I witnessed, done by locals (either EBCI citizens or those from nearby towns who were usually discernible by their intimate knowledge and conversations with the owners and employees of the stores). But this particular beat, DUM-dumdumdum DUM-dumdumdum DUM-dumdumdum, is, contrary to popular opinion, not just the nonchalant thumping of a customer browsing through a store. It is the aural stereotype of what it means to be American Indian. It is the caricature of a Pan-Indian drum beat which has no true indigenous origin, which only outsiders use, and which labels, from the outside, what is authentic. It says, “This is what I know American Indians should sound like.” And as it labels, it mocks.

This discussion of the “authentic” serves to remind us that this concept is in and of itself a complicated and contested word in the same manner as “culture” and “identity.” The above items that some tourists rejected as inauthentic are actually made by EBCI citizens. Are these authentic American Indian crafts? Inauthentic historical “junk?” And who is the authority that makes these differentiations? So far we have seen how some tourists view and make this claim, but how is this claim deployed by the EBCI and EBCI citizens? (see figures 7.3–7.5),



Figure 7.3: Qualla Arts & Crafts Mutual, Inc.



Figure 7.4: Item from a Qualla Boundary store, "Authentic Arrows."



Figure 7.5: Item from a Qualla Boundary store, “All Dreamcatchers Cherokee Made.”

It was the consistent barrage of incidents such as those above during this transition time from nostalgia to heritage tourism that led some EBCI citizens, such as the ones quoted earlier, to become more vocal about how they were being represented to the public. The sagging tourism industry left the EBCI nation without means to address this issue. Here we can see that having an arrested economy contributes to a lack of power to effect wide and sweeping change. Without monetary power, the museum cannot be updated, teachers cannot be paid, and businesses cannot renew their stock. The casino’s success changed this. Suddenly presented with a new influx of funds, EBCI leaders were able to update and build new structures for their nation (schools, hospital, roads, etc.) and start educational programs, ranging from Cherokee language to “18th Century Cherokee Clothing Workshops” (Museum of the Cherokee Indian 2011), and develop grants for their schools’ Cherokee-specific

courses such as the basket making and pottery program which brings in a master artist each month to help teach (Foltz 2011). They assumed the power to recreate their representations themselves. No longer would they rely on non-EBCI entrepreneurs or a few families to start businesses and fund their Cultural District. They could, and did, reinvent the Qualla Boundary from the ground up. This was the power to create and disseminate their representation of themselves through their own words and actions.

This is not to imply that all EBCI citizens agreed on these new representations, or that all even cared about them. Like all nations, Native Nations are composed of a collective of individuals who each have their own ideas about how their nation should function. Some EBCI citizens did *not* want to change their representation. After all, it had served as a privacy barrier between them and the waves of tourists that descended upon Cherokee. And some citizens could not agree on *what* they should be portraying or how it should be portrayed. This is a common conundrum for a nation creating an historical museum: what to include and what *not* to include. A museum has a finite amount of space. Decisions must be made on what aspects of this portrayal will be shown to the public and what will not. But regardless of these points of contention, these changes in representation were indeed made (see figure 7.6).



Figure 7.6: Museum of the Cherokee Indian.

Interestingly, I have been asked during lectures whether it was the tourists or the EBCI that initiated these changes. This question gets to the heart of inquiries into authenticity and representation. In what ways do tourists, EBCI citizens, and the EBCI government assert their claims of authenticity in representation? Who determines how to fulfill this claim, and who determines even if this claim is valid? And why is this concept so important for both the EBCI and its tourists? My answer to the question of who initiated these changes is that it was both and neither. Instead, there is a kind of synchronicity between tourists wanting to experience new representation (but not really having a vision of what that was) and the EBCI wanting to reformulate their own representation and now being empowered to do it. This choice of change by the EBCI illustrates that it is certainly not the wish of American Indians to be preserved in a bottle of cultural formaldehyde, preserved in time for decades to come. American Indian societies, as with all societies, have always consistently adapted to ever-changing environments and they are no different today. Transformation—in this case, the type of tourism market—is a necessary element of every society. Tourists may have wanted

this change and demanded an authentic experience, but it was EBCI leaders, citizens, and businesspeople who were the agents of this change. The change came from within, and the power and autonomy that the casino produces fueled this change. And this boundary of representation is still in the process of being transformed, both by the EBCI and by tourists.

And so it was that EBCI leaders began buying and clearing out the old remnants of the Qualla Boundary's past—including buying and shutting down generically pan-Indian businesses. They began building a state-of-the-art museum (complete with a holographic Cherokee) that would later include the addition of an entire research wing. EBCI leaders renovated the Oconaluftee Village (opened in 1952), which resembles Colonial Williamsburg. In Oconaluftee Village, you can walk around a replica of an historic EBCI village, circa 18th century (1759), see artists working at their crafts and ask them questions, hear lectures in the replica council house about the EBCI political system, and watch traditional social dances in the small square pavilion, all for, as the advertising says, “a more authentic and historical experience” (Cherokee Preservation Foundation 2009). Additionally, EBCI leaders updated two more attractions: the Unto These Hills theater performance drama (updated both technologically and in content (Thompson 2009)) and the Qualla Co-operative art market. In addition, the governing boards of the Cherokee Historical Association, which had long been governed by outside entities, were taken over by tribal citizens (Thompson 2009). The tourism-buffer boundaries which had long served the EBCI were transforming. Finally, they began providing funding to businesses to update their storefronts, began a new marketing campaign, and started planning new attractions for tourist families vacationing on the Qualla Boundary. The heritage tourism change in attractions plus the casino revenue have allowed EBCI leaders to exercise a high degree of control in the content of their image,

culture, and history on the Qualla Boundary. Regardless of the internal conflicts that inevitably occur in a transforming nation, the fact was that EBCI leaders were empowered to recreate their representation during a time when the visiting public was ready to see, hear, and experience it.

This transition is ongoing. The EBCI have many more short-term and long-term plans for more construction and reconstruction of their boundaries. As I mentioned before, one of the calls from almost all tourist-oriented small business owners was for the EBCI government to help recreate Cherokee as a more family-friendly destination, which they believe it was before the large casino was the EBCI's primary focus. Teresa of Granny's related that,

In the summer, we still get the summer visitors and stuff— Fourth of July, for example. Fifteen years ago or 25 years ago when we first started out, Fourth of July was hell week. It was. You couldn't keep enough people working. You couldn't keep enough food cooked. The traffic would be backed up almost to the foot of the mountain down here and coming in from all directions.

Another business owner (anonymous) echoed these sentiments,

The target market has changed here in Cherokee since that casino. In my opinion it used to be like family oriented. Family would come and they would do family activities and then part of those activities involved the shopping downtown. It can be completely dead here and it used to be bumper-to-bumper here in the summer. We still have some families coming through but everything is just down, in the last 20 years. We've talked to business owners that have been here 30 years and they say, "We don't know if we can make the mortgage."

Eventually EBCI officials, such as Gary Ledford and Patrick Lambert echoed that,

"Cherokee no longer meets that requirement of a family destination" and, "What we have to do is recreate the family environment" (McKie 2011q). Chief Hicks backed this by including in his 2011 Comprehensive Plan for Progress: to continue to seek family-oriented attractions in line with our vision for responsible tourism expansion. To this end, in 2011 the Cherokee

Fun Park was re-opened by the EBCI government. The Tribe had bought it a few years earlier after a consulting firm had commented that it needed to be re-tooled into a more culturally-appropriate venue¹⁰⁰. At that time, it was a generic fun park including mini-golf, go-carts, and an arcade that had become increasingly run down over the years. As one of the first attractions tourists see on the Qualla Boundary coming out of the GSMNP Park, it had a prime location. The EBCI bought the park, and it languished, abandoned, for at least two years while the neighbors tended the weeds and landscaping so that their stores would not look deserted, too. In May of 2011, the park was reopened after renovation (McKie 2011c). It was interesting that despite the multiple efforts on the part of the EBCI to address Cherokee-specific imagery on the Qualla Boundary, the mini-golf course still contains one lone teepee. (See figure 7.7)



Figure 7.7: Cherokee Fun Park 2011.

¹⁰⁰ According to the Cherokee One Feather, “The new Park will be culturally-sensitive and correct and Entech [consulting] will work closely with EBCI cultural advisors.... They want to be culturally correct in everything that they do. They want to create a class A park” (TOP Office 2011).

Small Businesses and Representation

[The t-shirts are] just Native image or style, but the crafts got to be Indian. [Ron, Talking Leaves bookstore]

It's authenticity. [Teresa, Granny's, talking about what is important for the EBCI to get right in their public representations]

But what do these changes undertaken by the EBCI government mean for small businesses on the Qualla Boundary, and how can these changes be seen in both material culture and practices?

As EBCI leaders made these changes, small business owners in Cherokee had to update and adjust to the new developments. In this way, the claim of authenticity also comes from the tangible and physical manifestation of an image being projected onto the marketplace. One result of this new representation projection is that the EBCI is offering loans and grants (see Appendix B) to small businesses located on the Qualla Boundary, for the refurbishment of small business facades into the new style of stone and heavy lumber that will be required for a more authentic, "distinctly Cherokee" (in this case, historical) look as specified in the EBCI's Downtown Business Master Plan. This plan was designed by the EBCI government and small business owners over the span of a few years. In these cases, the EBCI government offered incentives and passed laws encouraging businesses to change their appearance to one of a more "mountain" and/or "Cherokee" theme (i.e., no teepees or feathered head-dress signs, more heavy-wood and natural stone frontage, etc.). One example of this was the new regulation for signage which required that business signs be culturally appropriate to the EBCI (Office of Economic Development 2009). In the Downtown Cherokee Revitalization Design Guidelines it states:

Traditionally Cherokee structures were covered with plated mats of cane and sticks and then covered with mud. As interaction with settlers increased, The Cherokees

occupied log homes similar to those of their neighbors; this provides us with an example of *identifiable Cherokee architecture*.

Buildings in the business district should be sided with cedar sita, lap siding, board and batten, or log construction. Plaster or exterior insulation finish systems may be used to create the *historical texture*.¹⁰¹ [See Figure 7.8; emphasis added]



Figure 7.8: Refurbished storefronts.

Compliance with this Qualla Indian Boundary Heritage Development Plan for small businesses is currently being discussed, but the question of the agency of these small business owners in this process remains. Does this tribal funding bolster individual agency by providing the monetary means for expression; or do the structural regulatory constraints associated with these programs outweigh the business owners' individual agency? In these

¹⁰¹ Res. No. 717 – CDOT authorized to seek funding from Cherokee Preservation Foundation for the completion of Phase 2 of the Cultural District Streetscape for \$500,000 –Amended/Passed (TOP Office 2011; TOP Office 2011).

Another renovation set for the next five years is the “Artisan and Craftsman” District that will encourage walking traffic and promote “cultural integrity” (Hicks Principal Chief 2011a). The third phase began in October 2011 and, “includes culturally themed streetlights, underground utility wires, new and wider sidewalks, crosswalks stamped with cultural symbols, improved landscaping and signage, and the addition of benches, bike racks and recycling bins” on the major thoroughfare through Cherokee of 441 (Foltz 2011).

plans we see the tribal policy that is being implemented to encourage and bolster the emergence of heritage tourism-centric small businesses on the Qualla Boundary. However, although this tribal policy is relevant in that it highlights the importance of small businesses and the changing tourist interests to the EBCI, my research reveals that such policies are only augmenting the market changes that individual business owners had already begun to respond to (made most apparent, as we have seen, in the physical manifestation of these stores: i.e., the products they sell) and are simply continuing an historical and economic trajectory that was already being defined by those individuals.

Inventory Changes

The most self-evident manifestations of the changes taking place for tourism in Cherokee can be seen in the products that the small businesses sell. Many businesses that serve tourists are battling with two competing tourism interests. First, there is the new heritage tourist who primarily wants locally-made, hand-crafted, “authentic” EBCI items. Second, there are more locally-based tourists who cannot afford, or do not want, artisan crafts¹⁰² and instead want more generic, fun, and cheaper items (e.g., a plastic Cherokee snow-globe, colored headdresses, cheap t-shirts, etc.). Choosing how best to serve the needs of the tourist market is a decision store owners struggle with every season. Beyond customer needs, there is one other aspect to choosing inventory: cost to the owner. Stocking a store with foreign-made, pan-Indian nostalgia goods is far cheaper for the store owner than keeping stocked with local, handmade crafts (especially, as Abe does, when the store owners buy the items as opposed to having them on consignment), leading to lower start-up and overall inventory costs (Lambert 2011b:166).

¹⁰² Most tourists who come to Cherokee from neighboring residences do so because it is a quick, and cheap, weekend outing.

But this new EBCI emphasis on authenticity in representation feeds the internal pressure of artists and business owners to maintain this new form of representation. And, for small businesses and artists, despite the internal (EBCI governmental) pressure, they struggle with the need to balance the transformation of the EBCI's public representation with the need to provide consumers with the items they want to buy in order to stay in business. As Natalie related in her experience as an artist:

So, yeah, I think that every artist has that concern. And there's no shame in making art to sell. And those who make art to sell know it. And those who don't know that they're making art to sell, I don't know. There are those who don't know that they're making art to sell and those that do know it. And that's all.

The products that these stores sell fall into three basic categories. First, for tourists, there are fewer of the nostalgia items than in the past, but they are still very much a part of the product line for tourist-centric stores—and highly visible. After all, it is much easier, physically, to hang a cheap hot-pink headdress outside your store (rain or shine) than it is to hang a five-foot wide, \$1,500 hand-carved set of Cherokee clan masks. These are the products that stir up the most controversy on the Qualla Boundary. As the businesses struggle to provide the consumers with the products they want and can afford, some of the EBCI citizens object to being represented by pan-Indian, or even blatantly offensive products. Patrick Lambert addressed this during his run for Principal Chief in 2011 when he emphasized that the tribe needs to try and get away from the 'rubber tomahawk-type shops' (McKie 2011q). In addition, while I was finishing my summertime interviews during the height of the tourist season, the One Feather printed a picture of a new t-shirt being sold in several stores on the Qualla Boundary. On it was the text, "My Indian Name is 'Runs with Beer' – Cherokee, NC." The One Feather asked its readers to weigh in on this topic: funny

joke or offensive? It was not surprising that those who took the time to write in did not support this t-shirt and some called for temporarily closing the stores (Cherokee One Feather Staff 2009; McCoy 2009; Ledford 2009; Brown 2009).

Second, as I mentioned previously, historically a tourist might have had to go to an artist's home in order to buy an EBCI craft, but today nearly every store carries some of the items from the broad categories of arts and crafts made by local EBCI, or greater Cherokee, artists—baskets, masks, beaded jewelry, etc. The One Feather described the changes in these goods as follows in 2010 (Arch), “Traditionally, the Cherokee used wood carving for creating things of necessity, such as: bowls, utensils, tools, furniture and ceremonial mask. After the opening of the Great Smoky Mountain National Park, word carving transformed into a more decorative art to appeal more to visitors” (See figure 7.9).



Figure 7.9: 2009 gourd bowl.

Most stores carried both items from these two categories to a greater or lesser degree depending on their location on the downtown strips and the store owner's personal preference. An interesting cross-over between these two categories are the pan-Indian items that are handcrafted in Cherokee by EBCI artists, such as head-dresses, bows and arrows, etc. as in the images seen above ¹⁰³ (See figures 7.10 and 7.11)



Figure 7.10: Product at Qualla Boundary Store, "Cherokee Indian Crafts by The Cherokees."

¹⁰³ The historical roots of this practice can also be found in the previously mentioned moccasin factory owned and operated by the EBCI



Figure 7.11: Product at Qualla Boundary Store, “Infant Headdresses-Cherokee Handmade.”

Third and final, are the non-Cherokee, American Indian made arts and craft. These are stocked by individual store owners who travel throughout the country during the winter season lull in order to find new American Indian artists and products. The IACA has made this category much more prominent than ever before, as has the relative ease of travel that increases store owners’ access to these products. Many local owners have stated that people inquire about the artists who make items in their store and if he or she is Indian; the post-IACA laws have made answering this question a much more clear-cut interaction. Having said that, some owners handle this question (with its many subtle, and not-so-subtle, complexities), in their own way. For Ron, the answer in regards to EBCI artists is simple, “A lot of the local (artists) I say grew up with them, I know them, I know they’re locals. But some white person asked me this, ‘How do you know this is Indian made?’ I said grew up with them, went to school with them. That’s all” (Blankenship 2009).

Another interesting product delineation was the difference between products an artist made for general sale and those that were not publically available. Specifically, there are

products that one has to know to ask for and that are made to order. Generally, these are plain, utilitarian-type items that would be useful only to EBCI citizens, Cherokee, or possibly other American Indians. One example is a talking stick. I never saw these for sale in any store, but I did see EBCI citizens approach artists and request them. Generally, these items are not fancy and they do not garner a large price for the work put into them and, therefore, would not be suitable or worth the effort to render on a large (read: tourist) scale. One example of this is Granny's catering menu. Due to this issue of scale, Granny's cannot offer many "Cherokee foods" in their restaurant, but when people began requesting them for privately catered events, they gladly obliged. In fact, it has now become expected that when certain EBCI-citizen focused events take place, such as those at the new language school or large EBCI-only events at the ceremonial grounds, Granny's will be there with plenty of beanbread and grease. Teresa did give one more reason for why they do not offer these foods publically (although other restaurants do choose to):

If [visitors] are looking for Cherokee food, they're all going to be disappointed because it's just beans and potatoes and corn bread like everybody else has eat forever. The Cherokee food's very bland. Most of these people with this educated palette is not going to like it. Of course if you grew up eating it, it's really, really good. [See figure 7.12]



Figure 7.12: Granny's Catering of event for locals.

Pricing

After the Indianpreneurship class ended, four classmates were kind enough to join me for a follow-up focus group about the class and their (potential) businesses and experiences with businesses on the Qualla Boundary. We met at Myrtle's, located in the then Best Western that night. Myrtle's is comprised of one large room made in the style of a large log cabin with heavy timber, a stone fireplace, a smattering of EBCI and local mountain crafts on the walls and one large front window that faced the mountains. Myrtle's also gave discounts to local residents, especially in the winter, and judging by the empty wooden tables and seats we were definitely past tourist season. One part of the conversation that particularly struck me was lead by Alice regarding the difficulty of pricing of IACA crafts.

Alice, an EBCI citizen, had years of experience working for a tourist business and was looking to start her own party-planning operation for the locals. Here she is briefly joined by Robert, an expert EBCI craftsman and fluent speaker and teacher, and Daniel, who was researching opening a laundromat.

Alice: And they're wanting more Native Americans to open their own businesses. That's what they're gearing towards which I think is a good idea because this is our town.

Moderator: Do you think a lot of people would want to start businesses?

A: I think a lot of them got burned out when they did the Native American crafts. They got burned out because, excuse me, the white people came in here and just started taking over and they were selling them just here and there putting us out of business so we're like why go into business.

Robert: [They should] buy from the natives.

A: "Oh that's too much." They don't want to pay for it but then they come into the shops "Oh this is from China," "Oh this is from here." . . . Well, they don't want to pay the price either. Do they? They don't want to pay the price for Native American made necklaces or they want them to still be the prices of the Chinese.

Daniel: You're right. I've seen that when I was helping out Marian in her [Herb] shop. That was the case most of the time.

M: So what do you do at that point?

A: Exactly. A lot of people have quit doing it. They go to powwows and the same things are happening. . . . What are you going to do? It's like you're being squeezed out all the way around.

One thing to note about price is that tourist-centric trinkets are nearly always inexpensive—which makes it easy to take your family into a store, buy a few 50 cent items for the kids, and come out without breaking the bank. The locally, EBCI-made items range the most in price with some earrings or bracelets sold for under \$5, while intricately carved masks or sculptures can be sold for thousands of dollars. The non-Cherokee, American Indian items also have a wide range in price, but are rarely as cheap as the other two

categories due to the transportation costs involved and the local availability of cheaper items. On the lower end you can find bumper stickers for under \$10 while on the higher end there is jewelry for over \$1,000. The situation regarding pricing was a topic that came up again and again in my talks with store owners. Many stressed that in order to survive, they had to stock a wide variety of products to have something available for any given tourist.

In one instance a store owner, Bethany, who has lived in and around the Qualla Boundary for nearly five decades related a story to me that changed her entire business model. When she first took over ownership of her store, she had decided to stock it nearly entirely with “local handmade crafts,” many of high quality. One day, a woman with four little girls came into the store. As Bethany said, “They had just spent a night in a motel and they wanted a doll and the only dolls we had were a hundred bucks because they were all handmade. I said [to myself] ‘No. This is not going to work. We’ve got to have something for everybody.’ We don’t want them to feel like. . . ” That day those girls and their mother left disappointed. But from that moment on, Bethany decided that her no one should have to leave her store empty-handed due to lack of money. Today, her store’s incredibly dense stock and wide range of items can attest to this philosophy. As you walk in, you are overwhelmed by the sheer volume of products that sit on every surface, a result of over three decades of accumulation since the incident with the family above: jewelry, pottery, tobacco, pipes, books, CDs, salves, coats, t-shirts, bows and arrows, sculptures, and more appear at every glance. On this first glance, you may think this is just a tourist store (especially from the children’s section which carries the usual inexpensive plastic tom tom’s and fuchsia headdresses), but it only takes a moment to see that most of the store is filled with items that include crafts made by EBCI artists, natural medicines made by neighboring locals, and

supplies for locals (especially beads and other craft supplies). Although she stocks items only worth some change, Bethany also carries intricately-carved wooden sculptures worth thousands of dollars that cannot be found at other stores, as well as jewelry made by young artists who are just learning the trade. It is truly a store to behold.

Another owner decided to utilize an offer from the Sequoyah Fund to have a store make-over consultant come and evaluate his store's image¹⁰⁴. The advisors suggested a series of changes in order to make the store look "less cheap." He took their advice and made the changes only to have customers become so intimidated that they stopped purchasing items that had not changed price at all. As he told me, he had to sell the fancy shelves he bought for his t-shirt sales and place the shirts back in plastic bins on collapsible tables in order to move the product again. This is an oddly similar experience to that of the "chiefs" who have attempted to change their image to one of a more traditional Cherokee style (Beard-Moose 2009:86). Once they stopped wearing the pow wow styled regalia, the tourists no longer recognized them as American Indians and their business came to an abrupt halt. As related by Finger, Henry Lambert (commonly known as the World's Most Photographed Indian [full text section]) tried an experiment for three days: one wearing a war bonnet, the next was Cherokee clothing, and, finally, Plains regalia. The first and third day netted him about \$80, while the day in Cherokee clothing made only \$3 (Finger 1991:162). In the end, you need to have customers in order to survive as a business. Natalie of Tribal Grounds knows this balance better than anyone as her business is on the cutting edge in Cherokee , emphasizing waste reduction (with compostable materials) and even offering vegan food (an option nearly

¹⁰⁴ This was part of the "Getting Retail Right" program sponsored by The Sequoyah Fund, Inc. and taught by Jerry and Laurette Zwickel, who are merchandising consultants. Cash prizes were also awarded for, "those businesses making the greatest improvements based on what they learned from the program" (Seagle 2009a)

unheard of west of Asheville). She says, “But the fact is a business is a fine balance between structuring yourself for your community and you structuring your community” (Smith 2009). As a business owner, you can make the changes gradually and eventually you change the community because you are the community.

As we have seen, there are impacts felt by businesses as a result of this new type of tourism and constraints placed on businesses practices through larger, related “cultural revitalization” efforts. On the other side of this coin, however, as Natalie has pointed out above, is how the businesses not only play a part in this molding of representation, but how they, in turn, affect the EBCI’s concept of representation. This self-reshaping of small business identities not only comes from their own perspective of themselves, but also alters how they, and the entire community, are viewed from the perspective of outsiders, especially tourists. Small businesses who have the most interaction with tourists (since they do not charge an entrance fee, like the exhibits, everyone is welcome in) educate tourists to a significant degree¹⁰⁵ and, additionally, bolster community knowledge.¹⁰⁶ Therefore, my research questions suggest that, collectively as well as independently, individuals who own businesses on reservations make significant contributions not just to the overall tribal economy, but also to the tribal representation via space formation, knowledge distribution, and community support structures that they offer.

¹⁰⁵ This is one of the aspects that the Qualla-T program tackled head-on with their incorporation of historical and cultural training into their program of customer service for Cherokee.

¹⁰⁶ In selling goods that the community needs, let’s say corn beads for artists, they have to know about the product and are, thus, one of the many keepers and distributors of this knowledge (such as the quality of the corn beads, what the season has been like for growing the corn beads, etc.).

Seeing the Authentic

In the broader tourist market, tourists have always been fascinated by seeing the locals—especially the artists. Tourists will go to businesses where an artist is actively creating a product and spend more money on those pieces of art. Some have called this “racist” (Beard-Moose 2009) since it implies an “othering” inherent to tourism. I, on the other hand, believe that this is an extension of the validation many people seek when conducting business. People are often more comfortable doing business when they can see the owner and feel that there is a measure of accountability. Over the years, as businesses have grown, customers first could not talk to the owner, then could not even talk to a manager, then could not see a person anymore (i.e., the switch to phone service), and now they get to interact with a machine or someone who is outside of their country (here, it is mainly the physical distance, not the person from another country per se, that is often infuriating to the consumer). Customers are alienated by businesses more frequently than ever before. Part of the lure of tourism—and this is especially relevant in heritage and cultural tourism—is that you *do* get to connect with the person making the item. It validates the authenticity, not just of the product, but of the person making and selling it. The tourists can ask, “Are you Cherokee?” as she sees the person creating their piece of art. As Abe related to me:

When I did the craft shop, I pulled together eight of my favorite Cherokee artists that I wanted to really promote and I launched a website. Well I brought them all together, had it catered and hosted for them at my shop. . . . I said I want to do one show where you’ll all come up for two days, give your time, you sell everything at retail and because what I find is that people want to meet you guys. For me to build a collector base for you all, they’ve got to come and meet you. They’ve got to know about you. They’ve got to be able to connect with you the person. They did it. It was successful. We added a second show.

This also often applies to the small businesses owners. Many times, when I was sitting in a small business for the afternoon, I would hear tourists asking for the owner by name. They would come in from out of town specifically to see the owner, to purchase a product from a real person. In Bethany's case, nearly every single person who came into the store would ask if the owner was in that day. In reference to this close relationship with her customers, she says,

That's one of the things I try. I'm not going to say that what I do works for everybody, but [the customers inside] just reminded me of one of the things. They were in here earlier. . . . He said, "Well is this made here, is that made here?" I said, "Yes." I said, "Have you ever been to the Indian village?" He said, "No, but that's what I want to do." I said, "Well you need to go up there first and then decide what you would like as a souvenir." He said, "Do they have a store up there?" and I said, "They sure do and when you get through there, you'll go right into that store and they have all the things they make up there." But he came back here because I didn't try to corner him up and say be sure and come back and shop with me because when people leave, I want them to be happy. That's another thing. If I lose ten dollars on a sale, they're going to leave here happy, but most [business] people are not going to do that. See that's not real good business sense in the books, but like I say, I'm probably not a good one to go by the books. I'm just not. I'm just not that way, but it does work.

In Bethany's case, even though she is not an EBCI citizen, her knowledge of the market, the EBCI crafts-people, and her near lifetime of working on the Qualla Boundary gives customers the feeling of "authenticity" through her intimate knowledge of and connection with the people and the area.

The Market in Tourism Studies

How Cherokee Differs from Other Tourist Markets

Today in tourism studies, there seems to be as many types of tourism as there are adjectives: eco, heritage, volunteer, medical, mass, nostalgia, heritage, cultural, education, charity, etc. Where does Cherokee fit into this larger discourse regarding tourism?

In the spring of 2010, I attended the annual Society for Economic Anthropology conference that took place Tampa, Florida in hopes of answering that question. That year the topic was tourism. This small conference presented the most cutting edge research being done in anthropological tourism studies and was also a chance for the rare in-depth, informal discussions with other anthropologists about their experiences in tourism studies. The entire conference took place in one room. As the day progressed I was able to form a more complete picture of contemporary tourism studies. One of the first things that I realized during these lectures and discussions was that the differences between Cherokee as a tourist destination versus other tourist locations. It appeared that most of the papers and anthropologists at the conference focused on Central Mexico and South America with others from China, Java, Sweden, Togo, India, Africa, with only one other woman working with American Indians (and even her work was more generally focused on artistic installments rather than a place-based study). During these talks it seemed that some concepts were almost taken for granted in the realm of tourism: (1) the dichotomy of informal/formal markets by local crafts-people, (2) children as playing a principal role in the market as sellers of souvenirs and guides, and (3) the complex notion of who is “local”.

During the “Alternative Tourism” roundtable lunch that day I talked briefly about how Cherokee lacked these points. First, the only informal market that EBCI has is the yard sale market on Saturday mornings that is specifically, and only, for the locals. It is a place to see and be seen and is far more social than market-oriented, although a fair amount of goods get passed around on those mornings. Having destitute citizens of the EBCI gathering together in an informal market, laying blankets on the ground and selling goods to tourists in a public place is not seen on the Qualla Boundary like it is in Mexico or France (with artists

selling works by the Seine River). The only time I personally saw someone selling goods “under the table,” so to speak, was at the Ramp Festival.

Ramps are a food one either loves or hates since they are nightshades and thus in the same family as onions and garlic. I love them. They are also difficult to harvest if you don’t have the eye for them and it is easy to destroy a population if harvested incorrectly (you need to cut, rather than pull them and only 10% of a population can be harvested at a time in order for it to be sustainable). So, I left my ramp eating to festival time where a small plate fee of \$10 can get you a hearty dish filled with ramps, EBCI-enterprise farmed trout, potatoes, cornbread, coleslaw, mac-and-cheese, banana pudding, and a drink. The Ramp Festival, honoring EBCI elders and veterans, is always crowded. The council members and chief also take that time to speak. This year, I noticed a young man, possibly in his late teens, accompanied by his wife (as judged by their rings) making his rounds to each table while clutching enormous bags of ramps about the size of my head. He was blond, wearing work clothes of flannel and jeans and not from Cherokee judging by his lack of familiarity with anyone there. As he made his way to our table, he explained that he was selling ramps to pay for his electricity that month, having lost his job over the winter. This was the only time, in my memory, that a stranger, not associated with any store, tried to “hock goods” to me in public in Cherokee.

Second, I have never seen EBCI children selling goods or services (such as tours) to tourists, in the style practiced by many children from Mexico or India. I have seen plenty of younger adults working in their (or other’s) parents’ store, but other than that, the streets are empty of this common scene found in other tourist towns. I wonder if these first two points are similar in that they portray an image that the EBCI is opposed to presenting—although it

very well exists: that of desperate poverty. It is clear that poverty does indeed exist on the Qualla Boundary. Each day, Bethany's store is flooded with EBCI citizens in need of money who want to sell her cheap trinkets and beaded work for just a few dollars. In fact, this occurred to a lesser degree in many of the stores I frequented. With that in mind, why then don't these craftspeople simply sell directly to tourists instead of using a middleman? I know many EBCI people do not want the "hassle" of owning a store, but for a few hours on the weekend, they could have money in hand and possibly make a better profit. On the same token, children selling these crafts (as is widely known) make even more money—presumably because they are seen by tourists as destitute and/or possibly homeless, with little thought to if they actually are or not. And I think that is exactly where the issues arise: the appearance of poverty. I would attribute this rejection to the tribal government who has the power to prohibit these actions, especially in light of their new focus on bringing in wealthy couples and an upscale image to the tourist industry. But I have not found anything that legally prohibits this kind of activity (other than references to business licenses regulations proper, which are also in place at other tourist destinations, but which do not dissuade this activity). Therefore, I think that this may be an idea more deeply ingrained with the EBCI—and possibly most American Indians. It's the idea that non-Natives already assume that American Indians are desperately poor, so the natural inclination of an American Indian is to fight that stereotype. Related to this is also the simple possibility that the EBCI just do not want to be associated with either: (a) the ubiquitous tourist flea markets or (b) the image of Mexico and Mexicans. This was reinforced as I talked with some of the Indianpreneurship students. As Alice states,

I get tired of going downtown and seeing these Mexicans with these rugs hanging everywhere, these swimsuits hanging everywhere. I've seen people had to walk out in the street because the sidewalks are so full of display stuff. . .

And I hear the same thing over and over; "Oh another leather shop, oh another Mexican shop, oh this has got the same thing as the last shop," and you're like, "Well, I'm sorry," and then they'll look at me, Oh, are you Mexican, too?" I'm like, "Excuse me? No, ma'am, I'm not Mexican." "Well you're the first Indian we've seen since we've been here." You know? I've heard that so many times.

Public vs. Private

In Cherokee, there are two distinct groups of "public" peoples: the EBCI community and the tourists. I have discussed the lack of public vendors in Cherokee, but another facet to this question is, if public vendors did exist, where would they be able to sell their wares? Technically, the EBCI community has physical, public spaces available, such as parks, business buildings, and the occasional community building (buildings that specifically cater to one of the place-based sub-communities of the EBCI, such as the Big Cove Rec Center) but these are far from the path of most tourists. And the public places that the tourists generally travel to are either privately-owned or are event-oriented spaces owned and regulated by the tribal government (such as the fairgrounds, formerly known as the "ceremonial grounds," which is used only for events and not for general use). This leaves only one area that both the EBCI and tourist public frequent together: the Oconaluftee Island. But even in the EBCI's most publicized event, which is the Talking Trees Children's Trout Derby (as seen on ESPN), that (1) takes place on the Oconaluftee Island and (2) is very popular with both the EBCI citizens and the tourists, and even as one of the larger events of the year bringing in 1,600 children alone (along with over 300 volunteers) for the weekend in 2009 (Cornelison 2009), you do not see any informal vendors. This practice (or lack thereof) was reiterated in the classifieds section of the One Feather the week before the 2010 event

under the usual “Yard Sale” section was just one note: “No Yard Sales” at the BIA on Saturday, August 7th because of the Trout Derby” (Cherokee One Feather Staff 2011). Finally, there has been much discussion within tourism studies regarding the sustainability of tourism as an economic development platform for communities in need (see *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*). The EBCI have shown, though, that despite the fickle nature of tourists’ whims, through these efforts, tourism as a sustainable industry is possible—at least for the 100 years that they have engaged in it so far.

Buffering as a Concept

The concept of buffering, which I briefly touched on earlier in this chapter, is also a common topic in the tourist industry literature. Basically, this is the action that tourism-based people and societies take to separate their working lives (i.e., the tourist and tourism industry) from their home lives. The town of Cherokee is no exception, as has been discussed in other works (Beard-Moose 2009). The very layout of the town is set up for tourists to drive down the main thoroughfares, directing them through the middle of the Qualla Boundary directly to the entrance of the GSMNP. As you drive down the main roads, highways 19 and 441, you will see almost all of the big attractions and event locations for tourists: the casino, museum, Qualla Mutual Co-op, visitor’s center and newly installed River Walk, Oconaluftee Island Park¹⁰⁷, and many stores and hotels. These range from the heavy wooden pillars and stone work for the stores of the new Cultural District to older, worn down wooden stores covered in bright yellow inner tubes for floating down the river. Nearly all of the stores on this stretch are tourist-oriented, focusing on crafts, live pow wow dancer exhibitions, live

¹⁰⁷ The one attraction missing from this stretch is the *Unto These Hills* theater, which the EBCI have located above and behind the main drag in the mountainside itself.

crafts-people demonstrations, as well as hotels, motels, and restaurants, which proudly proclaim having “NC Mountain Trout Dinners” or “The Best Breakfast in Town.”

The working areas of the Cherokee government are located primarily off of these paths and on secondary roads which run parallel to the main roads—or, if the buildings are close to the main roads, they are set back as to be nearly invisible. These roads are less traveled and stores, hotels, etc. are non-existent until the road begins to join with the highway again near the entrance to the GSMNP. The homes and living spaces of the EBCI communities are even less noticeable as they are mainly (barring some subsidized housing) scattered throughout the mountains and forests on the Qualla Boundary. They are located on back roads that may not be labeled, paved, or even visible from certain angles (such is the case of one prominent public road, which leads to a certain quiet fishing hole in the forest that is nearly entirely hidden behind a building and, thus, invisible if not carefully pointed out). These residential areas are a maze of perpetually winding and twisting roads which follow the shape of the mountains. Even having a GPS cannot help you on these roads as the official road name (which could be something along the lines of BIA 4923) may not be the local name of the road. This unlabeled maze covertly and subtly serves as a deterrent to those who may decide to wander off of the tourist path.

Having described the set-up in Cherokee, I must also state that I believe that this concept of buffering in tourist destinations is emphasized and contemplated in academia to such a degree that it has become exaggerated. It should come as no surprise that most people want to separate their work life from their private life. For most people, that means that you leave the office and then go home. In a tourist location, however, this needs to encompass more than just the act of leaving your place of work. In a tourist town, your “boss” is

potentially everywhere: at your restaurant, at your grocery store, or at your movie theater. In order to truly separate yourself from the constant stream of “bosses,” it is necessary that this take a physically prominent form. So, in a tourist town, the “office,” in essence, becomes the tourist section of town and the “private life” must then be built outside of that. It is an extraordinary measure taken for an ordinary need.

Who is Local?

I never ask [local] people for their enrollment card. You just know people. I have never asked somebody for it and I won't. It's none of my business. [Ron, Talking Leaves]

The Sellers' Views

The third difference between other discussions of tourist markets and my experience in Cherokee was in the designations of “local.” The EBCI, and indeed most small mountain towns I visited, have no hesitation when answering the question, “Who is a local?,” a distinction which can be troublesome in other tourist destinations which have tourist activity throughout the year and tourists that live for extended periods of time, years even, at that location. I do not think that this is a particularly surprising point given that this is mainly a summertime tourist destination (there are no winter ski lodges in these parts of the mountains). Even people who have second homes in the mountains only visit for the few months in the summer. The bottom line is that you either tough it out for the winters, through blackouts, ice, and blizzards, or you do not. There are a few local people who leave for a month or two, but not much longer, only partially avoiding winter repercussions. In more temperate climates, you might have a high season and low season, but not a completely off season thereby having tourists—or long stay vacationers—as a common occurrence year-round. While many tourists may dream of having a beach bar in the Caribbean, it is the rare

“flatlander” (the common mountain term for those not from the mountains) who dreams of owning a craft store in Cherokee in February. Therefore, it is easy for the locals to point out who is not local: “Do you live here all year?” is all they need to know. In other words, the local is easily distinguished by his or her large winter wardrobe and snow chains for their tires.

This type of distinction can be seen at the Open-Mic Nights in the Tribal Grounds coffee house that were only held in the winter months to make them more appealing to locals. These open mic nights, generally hosted after-hours, drew in a wide variety of locals from both the EBCI citizenry and from neighboring towns. The crowd ranged in numbers from about fifteen to a full house depending on the weather and the publicity. The atmosphere was warm and friendly as nearly everyone knew each other. After grabbing a hot drink, there would be a good amount of chatting before the event started. You wander around and catch-up on any news or gossip for that week and then, eventually, settle in if there are any free chairs or couches that night. The stage was set up at the back of the store next to some soft couches and in front of the window that faces the river (although it was pitch black by 8 PM in the winter) with temporary chairs surrounding it. Natalie would announce each artist and speaker, who ranged wildly in scope and medium. A typical night might include Natalie reading an excerpt from *1491*, followed by a young man from Bryson City playing his own songs on acoustic guitar, the children’s language class singing carols, poetry readings, an elder EBCI citizen relating a family story, and an EBCI flute player. One night, even Johnny Cash’s cousin, complete in sequence and pompadour, kicked-off the night as he had been traveling through town on his way to another gig.

Thus, the winters serve as a prime time for courting of local patrons. This is considered a high priority for many businesses, even those that are primarily tourist-oriented, due to the local's year-round presence. Many other businesses offer discounts to encourage locals to come to their stores and use their services. At Myrtles, your EBCI citizenship card or driver's license showing your residency in either Swain or Jackson County will earn you a discount—a common practice in Cherokee stores. In wintertime, these efforts are promoted even more heavily through other advertised discounts and additional services.

The Customers' Views

But what are the tourists' views on who is a local? Many tourists come to Cherokee for the culture. Even those tourists who come to the Great Smoky Mountains for ecological (i.e., to experience the pristine forests, etc.), athletic (e.g., kayaking), gaming, and/or relaxation purposes, come to Cherokee *in particular* for the chance to learn about and experience Cherokee culture (either as advertised or imagined)¹⁰⁸. But, here is where the difference between the larger discourses in tourism studies and the experience of Cherokee differ again. As demonstrated by the title of this chapter, most of the cultural tourism customers are less concerned with who is local than with the question of who is (or where is) the “authentic” Indian (as Teresa and other owners and/or employees related to me via the “Where are the Indians?” questions). This relates to our much larger issue of authenticity as viewed by the tourist. Unlike other tourist areas, it's not enough to be a local mountain business owner, artist, etc. in Cherokee. Tourists want to see The Indians. Their experience in

¹⁰⁸ The one exception to this rule are the fly-fishers (and other spin-caster fishers to a lesser extent), who are drawn to Cherokee by the trophy trout waters. Cherokee holds several fishing events throughout the year including some, such as the Children's Trout Derby, that are quite large. In 2011, they even hosted the U.S. Fly Fishing Championship. Although, for these visitors, the fishing is still primary, the cultural experience of being on the Qualla Boundary is still a draw, as I was told by a regular Trout Derby volunteer who drove from Georgia every year.

Cherokee is incomplete without this and it is a question that, as Teresa states, is asked time and time again.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

Looking Forward: Current, and as of Yet, Unresolved Issues on the Qualla Boundary

All societies are in a constant state of economic, representational, and legal flux, and the EBCI are no different. Many topics that emerged while I was in Cherokee conducting this research are, as of yet, unresolved. Action has not (yet) been taken on the auditing of the rolls, although the proposal from the Enrollment Committee is scheduled to be announced at the tribal council meeting in July 2012 (Taylor 2012). The purchase of a significant parcel of land for economic development specifically for the construction of a second casino had just been completed, and a new financial training requirement for minors began the year after I left, as well as a new series of discussions of the state of the EBCI constitution. These are all important developments that will have lasting impacts on the EBCI as a nation, its citizens, and its small businesses. I will continue to keep abreast of these changes, and others that are sure to come, in my efforts to go further in the study of the important elements of small businesses in our society.

Health

One topic that I hope to address in the future concerns a problem which arose unexpectedly during my fieldwork—the problem of health and business ownership. The issue of health has consequences for all entrepreneurs, but for American Indians the intensity of chronic health problems ranging from diabetes to heart disease to cancer and multiple surgeries (sometimes as a result of business work) make it especially difficult for a small

business to run consistently and some have failed as a direct result. It would seem that another benefit to owning a small business on the Qualla Boundary and employing local citizens is that health care is provided by Indian Health Services, thus relieving the business owner of the cost burden of providing health care. Unfortunately, however, the state of IHS is such that less money is allocated to American Indians than to any other group of people, including, as we have seen, prisoners. Because of this, I have interviewed future business owners who feel it is their obligation to pay for the additional health care of their EBCI citizen employees, based on their own personal experiences of being without necessary health care (Groenwold 2009).

Expansion Projects

As I write this, there are many expansion projects for the Qualla Boundary. First and foremost is the purchase of new lands for building a second, separate, casino in Cherokee County (approximately an hour away from the main Qualla Boundary). The question, as I've addressed previously, is what impact will this have on the EBCI's primary income? Will it add visitors or pull visitors from the Qualla Boundary, and, consequently, how will this affect businesses both local to the Qualla Boundary and to Cherokee County? Tribal Council representatives who support the measure, such as Rep. Diamond Brown Jr., point to other casinos that compete in close quarters, but remain fiscally strong, such as the Seminole Hard Rock Café and the Miccosukee Casino which are located within an hour of each other (McKie 2010b). As we have seen, if advertising is any indication, the businesses and land owners around the Murphy (Cherokee County) area believe this will significantly increase both the worth of the land, the support of their businesses, and the overall economic growth of that region (Otwell 2010).

The EBCI Office of Planning & Development is trying to recruit chain stores and restaurants on a continual basis. These range from restaurants like Cracker Barrel, to local chains, such as Mast General Store, and franchises like Ace Hardware or Casual Male (Duvall 2010). At the time of my fieldwork, most of the stores were on hold for expansion for at least six months due to the continuing fallout of the recession. Within the next year, I expect some of these projects to move forward, however, and the impact on the local circulation of money of these will range depending on how many are franchises or local chains versus strictly nation chains. It also remains to be seen if these chain stores will draw in, as the EBCI expects, additional tourists who are eager to dine and shop in the comforts of known quantities¹⁰⁹ even while vacationing in a location specifically known for its “exoticness.” Or if tourists will take fewer vacations to Cherokee if it becomes populated by many familiar American chain stores and restaurants.

EBCI leaders are in the development stages of several new parks including a Cherokee Indoor Water Park, Hotel & Convention Center, and a Children’s Discovery Center following the re-opening in 2011 of the Cherokee Fun Park. In non-tourist enterprises, they are also consulting with the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians on forming a Federal Contracting venture. Collectively, these enterprises should significantly diversify the tribal income and may also impact the physical representation of the Qualla Boundary.

And finally, a newly required “How to Manage Your EBCI Money” program for high school students also began in earnest within a year of my leaving Western North Carolina. Its

¹⁰⁹ This is especially true of small children and tired parents who are picky eaters and leery of new foods. Even Teresa from Granny’s, whose food is based on comfortable familiarity, related that parents will bring in their kids with McDonald’s and Burger King bags in tow to their restaurant.

potential success, and how to judge its success, is an interesting topic that needs to be addressed after it has been in place for a few years.

Sustainability of the Market

The EBCI small business market has demonstrated remarkable sustainability over the past century. Ideas to continue this success are always being explored by EBCI leaders and citizens, such as partnering with the American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association to focus on international opportunities in American Indian tourism (a market especially large in Europe (Cherokee One Feather Staff 2010a). The coming decades may be tumultuous for citizen business owners, though. The new audit has yet to be acted on, but could result in the disenrollment some citizens or the grandfathering of some individuals' citizenship, but not their children¹¹⁰. There is also the passing away of the last in the lines of citizen small business owners (especially First Descendants). Both of these issues have serious ramifications. The loss of citizen business owners, in whatever fashion, could result in one of two primary impacts. The first could be that it would be a devastating loss of generations of business knowledge as the non-citizens' heirs leave the Qualla Boundary permanently. Without the proper management to take over these vacancies, these businesses could fail as the previous owners take their years of business knowledge with them. On the other hand, this could also be an opportunity that opens doors for other citizens, who do not have access to physical capital, to take up the baton of running a business and, thus, inspire an entirely new generation of small business owners on the Qualla Boundary.

¹¹⁰ These are only two of many possibilities that have been put forth—including to do nothing—by the EBCI tribal council and citizens.

Larger Scope

If I had more time in my fieldwork, I would have pursued more interviews with non-business and non-government associated customers in and around the Qualla Boundary. Although I had informal interviews with them throughout my time in Cherokee, I feel that this is a much richer area than I could cover with both more time and more content. My research in this span of time was mainly focused on the businesses themselves and their sustainability issues, but the next step seems to be to broaden this scope and include a more formal analysis of the perceptions of customers and residents near these businesses. Also within this larger scope, I would like to explore the businesses that focus on national and international efforts, thus building on the works of authors who expand our dichotomies of rural versus urban peoples (Lambert 2002). This could also add to the new works on globalization that would benefit from a greater inclusion of the efforts of American Indians (Peacock 2007; Anonymous2005).

Wal-Mart

I would be remiss in my efforts if I did not mention one of the most hotly debated topics that unfolded while I was in the field: the contract between Wal-mart and the EBCI. While I was in the field, this was the topic that was on everyone's lips. According to the One Feather,

The Wal-Mart Supercenter was slated to be 120,000 square feet costing the Tribe \$25 million to construct and was projected to bring in close to \$214 million in increased Tribal levy over a 25-year period. The lease was to be for 20 years with six five-year renewals for a total of 50 years possible. Wal-Mart would have also been responsible for yearly lease payments, averaging \$564,000 - \$720,000, regardless of their decision to close or relocate. [McKie 2010d]

At the time, it had been announced that negotiations with Wal-mart were nearly complete and that construction on the proposed site was to begin. I drove past the site throughout the

year, which was located next to the hospital and across from the new movie theater. I watched this site as the year progressed. I watched as it was clear-cut, then leveled, and then became oddly quiet.

I asked the business owners, EBCI citizens, and government employees what they thought of this new venture and the responses were, as to be expected, mixed. There were those who welcomed the superstore and claimed that it would have little impact on small businesses (Seagle 2009c), there were those who had already felt its negative impact on their previous businesses in other locations (Lambert 2007:247; Carl 2009), those who felt that their lives would be improved by not having to drive to Sylva (which has its own Wal-mart) and having the tax benefits of it staying on the Qualla Boundary, those who rallied against the western homogenizing influence of it, and there were those who predicted that it would fall through entirely. I must admit that I did not really believe this latter group of individuals. Surely the EBCI government would not start construction without locking in a contract with Wal-mart? The latter group must be cynics who were convinced of a worst-case scenario.

In the end, though, they were correct. After I left the field, Wal-mart pulled out of their negotiations in which they had agreed to come to the Qualla Boundary and left without another word. Their official excuse was that they had made a corporate-wide decision to focus on urban areas (Duvall 2010; McKie 2010d). This was a strange turn for a corporation whose initial success was generated directly from the rural market. The reaction from the local population was, again, mixed, but subdued—almost resigned. Wal-mart was not the first chain to woo the EBCI only to back out later. In fact, month after month, reports would come in from the economic development office relating their talks with various chains about coming to the Qualla Boundary. The answers were almost always no, usually due to the legal

investment issues for owning a business on the reservation as a non-citizen (discussed previously) or they would just say that they were choosing to focus on urban areas. This is another way of saying that there was not a sufficient population, in the view of the chain's leaders, to support their business. This was also strange considering the 3.6 million people who visit the casino annually.

What would have been the effect of Wal-mart on the Qualla boundary? An increased and diversified income source from the casino tax base? Better access to goods for the citizens? A reduction of small businesses? The homogenization of the Qualla Boundary? All of the above? None of the above? The speculation could be endless. And, unfortunately for my yearlong preparation, but fortunately for the people who did not support the store, discussions of the worldwide impacts of Wal-Mart as a corporation no longer have a place in this dissertation. However, the fact remains that Wal-mart had agreed to open a store and then reneged on that agreement. In the mountains of the Appalachians, this is not an action lightly forgiven¹¹¹.

Summary

One of the most important theoretical questions that anthropology has asked is to what extent an individual is able to transform or reconfigure her own society. If we try to answer this question by looking at the research being done today about tribal economies in the United States, the answer would be a resounding, "very little." Many models and theories have been developed in the last decade to answer the urgent question of how best to encourage economic growth for nations worldwide that are deeply in debt and have few

¹¹¹ Since the Wal-mart withdraw, there has been more of a public call to support small business rather than chains—although I make no claims as to correlation versus causation—such as from Juanita Plummer Wilson who stated that the Tribe needs to quit looking into attracting big box stores and corporations. "Why not invest into our people here?" (McKie 2011q).

resources. There is much attention being given to top-down solutions as the issues of globalization and other macroeconomic topics take the lead in current research. This is particularly true for studies with Native Nations as the overwhelming majority of research being done on tribal economies discusses only tribally-owned ventures, such as casinos. Some of these models have helped Native Nation leaders make great strides towards achieving the goal of economic stability for their nations, but have tended to overlook the individual and grassroots American Indian population, assuming as they do that the only significant agent of social and economic change is the Native Nation government.

In my work with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, I have tried to rectify this imbalance. More specifically, I have shown that individually-owned American Indian small businesses can have a positive and substantial impact on the development and economic sustainment of an entire nation. My research testifies to this expected, high positive value of private businesses, so it is my hope that other Native Nations may also focus their policies around further strengthening small businesses as a means of strengthening their economies and societies. By documenting and exploring the broad range of ways in which American Indian individuals are transforming their reservation economies, I hope this work will contribute to the contemporary anthropological debates regarding development theory by demonstrating the complex effects of small businesses on reservations and how these impact questions of agency, the constructions of economic identities, and the forces of social change. In doing so I also hope this research will begin to dismantle the negative stereotypes about the economic identity of American Indians as businesspeople and thus empower Native Nations and their citizens to seize the opportunities provided through these small, but powerful, ventures (See figure 8.1)



Figure 8.1: Oconaluftee Island.

APPENDIX A

EBCI SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE OFFICES

Sequoyah Fund Office - An independent, non-profit American Indian Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). “Sequoyah Fund’s mission is to provide training, technical assistance, and resources to support entrepreneurship, business start up and expansion, and community development in the seven far western counties of North Carolina and on the Qualla Boundary” (Sequoyah Fund 2011).

Office of Planning and Development – “The Mission of the EBCI Office of Planning and Development is to mobilize available economic resources to enhance the overall quality of life for our people. We strive to grow job opportunities, to improve the business climate and tax base of the Tribe, and to promote a self-sustaining and diverse economy on the Qualla Boundary. The Planning and Development Office oversees the following areas: Economic Development, Tribal Planning, Grants Administration, Building Rental, Business Development, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS)” (Office of Planning and Development 2012).

Cherokee Business Development office – Works in conjunction with the Sequoyah Fund Office providing counseling and assistance to new and existing business owners in the areas of business plan development, financial projections, loan packaging, retail and development property location, employee background checks, bookkeeping essentials, and assistance in filling out any applications. All services are free (EBCI Business Guide brochure 2009).

Cherokee Preservation Foundation – “The Cherokee Preservation Foundation was established on November 14, 2000, as part of the Second Amendment to the Tribal-State

Compact between the EBCI and the State of North Carolina.” The CPF help protect, preserve and enhance the natural resources and aesthetic appearance of Cherokee tribal lands in North Carolina; assists in economic development of the Cherokee community and the seven westernmost counties in North Carolina in which the EBCI’s tribal lands are located (Haywood, Jackson, Swain, Macon, Clay, Graham and Cherokee) through improved public services, recreation and entertainment capabilities, and community economic development; fosters employment opportunities on or near Cherokee tribal lands; and provides funding for the preservation, research, restoration, and/or development of the history, tradition, culture, language, arts, crafts, heritage and overall well-being of the Cherokee people” (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians 2005). The CPF has invested over \$50 million in the local community since its inception in 2002. The organization gave a total of \$5,401,161 to 69 various grantees in 2010 alone (McKie 2011e).

Cherokee Chamber of Commerce – A non-profit organization “dedicated to promoting a healthy business community in and around the town of Cherokee” (Cherokee Business Development Center & Sequoyah Fund 2009) offering marketing, merchandising, business management, and financial planning programs.

Greater Cherokee Tourism Council – Formed after my fieldwork in January 2011. “The GCTC’s priority will be bringing Cherokee’s tourism-related organizations together while working on the common goal of bringing more overnight visitors and tourism dollars to Cherokee. Participation consisted of representatives from the Sequoyah National Golf Club, Ryan Ott, Ryan Lanzen and Chase Sneed, Cherokee Historical Association, Linda Squirrel, The Museum of the Cherokee Indian, Dr. Barbara Duncan, EBCI Transit, Kathy Littlejohn, EBCI Fish & Game, Robert Blankenship and EBCI Travel and Promotion, Robert

Jumper, Mary Jane Ferguson, Josie Long and the Cherokee Chamber of Commerce, Matthew Pegg, Qualla Arts & Crafts Mutual, Inc. and EBCI Parks & Recreation” (Cherokee Business Development Center & Sequoyah Fund 2009; EBCI Travel & Promotion 2011).

APPENDIX B

SEQUOYAH FUND LOAN EXAMPLES

Sequoyah Fund Loans available at time of writing:

- **New Economy Fund** provides business loans totaling \$50,000-\$250,000 for green, knowledge-based, or creative economy businesses located in the seven far-western counties of North Carolina. These funds are available to qualified individuals who have resided in the region for at least two years. SCORE of Asheville will collaborate with Sequoyah Fund to provide success coaching to these clients. USDA Intermediary Relending Program (IRP) in conjunction with Southwestern Planning Commission's Economic Development Administration (EDA) will provide the capital for this loan product. EBCI enrollment is not required.
- **Healthy Foods Venture Fund** will provide lending prudently and productively in unconventional markets often overlooked by conventional financial institutions. More and more consumers are searching for fresher, healthier, unprocessed, and nutritive foods that will help them stay fit and healthy. An increase in obesity and the incidence of heart disease has resulted in this dramatic change. In response to this market demand and in an effort to bolster local brand development, The Sequoyah Fund will seek investments from the Cherokee Preservation Foundation and the CDFI Fund to support business development in this arena. EBCI enrollment is not required.
- **Downtown Revitalization Fund** provides commercial real estate façade renovation loans up to \$150,000. Qualifying individuals must own or lease a business located in the Cherokee Business District. EBCI enrollment is not required.

- **The Credit Builder Fund** will provide innovative solutions to help build client credit and financial access in order to grow their businesses and/or personal assets. The Credit Builder is a credit-repair loan program coupled with intense one-on-one credit counseling. These consumer loans include a client savings program designed to pay off and remove derogatory comments and past due bills named on credit reports. The Cherokee Business Center, under the leadership of Gloria Rattler, has committed a full time-staff member to this program. The Sequoyah Fund will seek investments from the Cherokee Preservation Foundation and the CDFI Fund to support this initiative. Anyone living on the Qualla Boundary may qualify for this loan.
- **Business Enterprise Fund** provides business retention or expansion loans totaling \$50,000-\$250,000. Qualifying individuals must be enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians living on the Qualla Boundary or in the seven far-western counties of North Carolina. See our Guide to Starting a Business in Cherokee (PDF).
- **New Beginnings Fund** provides new business start-up loans not exceeding \$50,000. Qualifying individuals must be enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians living on the Qualla Boundary or in the seven far-western counties of North Carolina. See our Guide to Starting a Business in Cherokee (PDF).
- **Capital Projects Fund** provides loans to Tribal Enterprises/Non-profit organizations. See our Guide to Starting a Business in Cherokee (PDF).
- **Healthy Home Rehabilitation Fund** provides consumer loans up to \$15,000 for home repairs. New appliances purchased must be energy star rated. Qualifying

individuals must be enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians living in the seven far-western counties of North Carolina.

- **Artisan Studio Fund** provides business loans up to \$25,000 for the construction of home-based studios. Qualifying individuals must be enrolled members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians living in the seven far-western counties of North Carolina (Sequoyah Fund 2011).

APPENDIX C

HICKS CAMPAIGN AD 2011

Michelle Hicks Campaign Ad 2011 (Hicks Principal Chief 2011b)

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL TOURISM

If you drove through Cherokee this past weekend, you noticed that the Island Park played host to thousands of families for the Annual children's Talking Leaves Trout Derby. I was reminded that events such as this, and natural resources like our waterways and parks, are symbols of the direction our tribe should take for sustainable, eco-friendly, culturally-authentic economic development. Whether it is in the Cultural District of Cherokee, or at ancestral sites in Snowbird, or at historic landmarks in Cherokee County, the Eastern Band has tremendous opportunities to responsibly capitalize on the beauty of our homelands.

Many of us can remember the days, long before gaming, when the streets of Cherokee were packed with visitors excited about what we had to offer. Lately however, many of us are also dismayed to drive by empty store fronts or unkempt retail property sitting vacant. Furthermore, communities such as Snowbird and Cherokee County possess tremendous untapped opportunities for promoting our cultural and natural landscape. We have never explored the depths of their potential to the extent they deserve.

As part of my economic development plan for the next four years, I propose to:

- Awaken the atmosphere of downtown and cultural districts with events and performance artists who invite a dialog with visitors about our culture
- Insure that tribally-owned lands and buildings are open and accessible for business during the tourism season. This enhances atmosphere and provides both seasonal job opportunities and increased levy revenue for the tribe.

- Create an open access Artists and Craftsman District that encourages walking traffic and maintains cultural integrity with guidelines for the types of products sold. Our artists will not be lost in amongst shelves of foreign-made, cheap trinkets. They will have their own space that recognizes their work for the treasure that it is.
- Continue to seek family-oriented attraction opportunities in line with our vision for responsible tourism expansion.
- Explore and implement opportunities for Snowbird and Cherokee County to create their own sustainable attractions that meet the specific needs at their communities.

As a tribal government it is not our role to inhibit or control private business owners. These entities undoubtedly serve an important role for our community. However, we can and will take all necessary steps to insure that tribally-owned businesses and properties are environmentally friendly and culturally authentic.

APPENDIX D

“ENROLLMENT FACTS”

Enrollment facts submitted to the One Feather by the EBCI Enrollment Office, published in the Cherokee One Feather:

October 6, 2009:

Did you know? At one time there were age requirement deadlines for Enrollment.

These deadlines were as follows:

- September 11th, 1995 – August 1, 1996: A person must have been Enrolled within three years of their date of birth.
- August 2nd, 1996 –December 2nd, 1998: A person must have been Enrolled within three years of their date of birth or within one year following their 18th birthday.
- December 3rd, 1998 – April 7th, 1999: A person must have been Enrolled within the 18years of their date of birth.
- April 8th, 1999 – August 4th, 1999: A person must have been Enrolled before reaching the age of 19.
- August 5th, 1999 – Present (2009): There is no deadline for enrollment.

July 1, 2009:

Did you know? As of June 1, 2009, the EBCI had 14,253 Enrolled Members. 7,206

Members are Female; 7,047 Members are Male.

May 28, 2008:

Did you know there have been a total of 13 rolls done on the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians? The first two Rolls were completed prior to the Removal and the final roll is the Revised Roll that new enrollees are placed on today. The 13 Rolls are:

- 1817 Reservation Roll
- 1817-1835 Emigration Roll
- 1835 Henderson Roll
- 1848 Mulloy Roll
- 1851 Siler Roll
- 1852 Chapman Roll
- 1869 Swetland Roll
- 1882 Hester Roll
- 1907 Council Roll
- 1908 Churchill Roll
- 1909 Guion Miller Roll
- 1924 Baker Roll
- 1957-Present day Revised Roll

September 29, 2011:

Did you know?

The 1924 Baker Roll had 3,148 members. Of those, 104, are still living. Forty-four (44) of the surviving Baker Roll members live on tribal land.

Of the total number of enrolled members, 14,598, there are 407 full blooded members, still living.

Currently, there is no age requirement to become a member of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. However, an ordinance was passed in September Council. If ratified, effective Dec. 1, enrollment into the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians will be restricted to those persons under the age of 19.

DNA testing establishing the paternity and maternity of potential applicants is now required for membership into the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. The cost for testing through 1 Family Services, located in the Tribal Enrollment Office, is \$195 per family unit. Payment is due at the time of testing.

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